

Public Personnel



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Quarterly Journal of

The Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada

Public Personnel Review

*The Quarterly Journal of the Civil Service Assembly
of the United States and Canada*

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Blaine Hoover

1893-1950

BLAINE HOOVER, past president of the Civil Service Assembly, died on September 3. In his death the Assembly has lost a distinguished member and the nation has lost an able public servant.

His early career was in management, and particularly personnel management. Successful in the industrial field, he first turned his interests to government when he became personnel advisor to the United States Shipping Board in World War I. Returning to industry after the war, he held a succession of important management posts during the next fifteen years.

In 1933, he re-entered the public service as personnel director for the Illinois state relief and WPA program. From this post he went in 1937 to the Chicago Park District to head that organization's personnel program. Under his guidance the program of the Park District achieved a stature that brought it national renown.

He was summoned to Tokyo in 1946 at the request of General MacArthur to head the United States Personnel Advisory Mission to Japan. Purpose of the Mission was to lay the groundwork for a complete overhaul of the ancient feudal civil service of the national government. The accomplishment of this objective was considered to be a major step toward the eventual rebuilding of the Japanese government along modern democratic lines.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Public Personnel Review* the account of that undertaking—its problems, its obstacles, and its ultimate success—is told in detail. In a very real sense he brought to this last monumental task the rich fund of wisdom and experience gained from his lifetime career. The new Japanese civil service system stands as enduring testimony to his talent.

His deep interest in the public personnel field drew him actively into the affairs of the Civil Service Assembly. In 1942 he served as Chairman of the Central Regional Conference, and the following year he was elected as a member of the Executive Council. In 1946 he became President of the Assembly and held that office for two years.

His qualities of leadership were of the unobtrusive sort—quietly vigorous, gently forceful. First and last he was loyal to the demanding creed of selfless public service, and his loyalty to that creed inspired and elevated those about him. His career and his creed are now the heritage of those many who mourn his loss.

Recent Progress in Federal Personnel Administration . . . JAMES M. MITCHELL

MUCH has happened in the federal service in the five years that have elapsed between the end of World War II and the crisis in Korea. The tremendous reconversion from a war service to a competitive civil service basis has been successfully completed.¹ This involved an unparalleled examining program. Literally thousands of examinations were held and millions of individuals competed.² This task was further complicated by unprecedented turnover rates which prevailed everywhere in the postwar years. In this "tight" labor market, shortages developed in several occupational categories, and the Commission turned to new recruiting, examining, and certifying devices to cope with this difficult situation.

Substantial progress has also been made in most of the other major aspects of personnel administration. The Commission has been reorganized, a new classification act has been passed, a new approach to efficiency ratings has been proposed, a new promotion policy statement has been issued, and a program for the development of executive personnel is under way. Other changes in federal personnel practices are being considered.

Reorganization of the Commission

THE PERSONNEL Report of the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch

¹ Harold H. Leich and Stephen P. Ryder, "From War Service to Civil Service; The Progress of the Reconversion Program," *Personnel Administration*, July, 1949.

² From July 1, 1946, through May 29, 1950, 130,933 examinations for various occupational specialties and grades have been held by the Commission's central and regional offices and committees and boards of examiners. 7,242,000 applications have been processed.

• JAMES M. MITCHELL is a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission. Prior to his appointment in October, 1948, Mr. Mitchell was for eight years Director of the Headquarters Office of the Civil Service Assembly. During World War II he served as Commander in the U.S. Coast Guard.

of the Government (the Hoover Commission) raised some fundamental questions about the organization and the role of the Civil Service Commission. Their report stated, for example, that:

The utilization of the Commission form of organization for handling the administrative work of the central personnel agency has had the effect of slowing down the administrative work of the Commission and, as a result, the handling of personnel transactions in the departments and agencies.

It therefore recommended that:

Full responsibility for the administrative direction of the work of the Civil Service Commission should be vested in the chairman of the Commission. . . .

The "full Commission" should be responsible for making recommendations to the President about civil service rules and for the issuance of regulations and standards. It should take whatever steps may be necessary to insure compliance with rules, regulations, and standards, and should act as an appellate body in connection with the appeal functions vested in the Commission.

Any basic survey of the civil service system is bound to raise the question of organization. The Civil Service Commission was the first of the boards or multiheaded agencies to be set up in the federal government. In its early days, the civil service reform movement was primarily interested in eliminating party politics from public employment. For this purpose, a bipartisan commission seemed ideal, since the minority party member would be able to check and, if necessary, to publicize any temptation of the majority to compromise the political neutrality of the civil service. The commission system has served this purpose admirably. In 65 years, accusations of political partisanship against the Commission have been extremely rare. Public confidence in the impartiality of the federal civil service is a great source of strength to our democracy.

Despite this achievement, governmental reformers of a later generation, emphasizing efficient and dynamic administration,

have increasingly found fault with the commission form of organization for management purposes. The President's Committee on Administrative Management in 1937 found that:

The board form of organization is unsuited to the work of a central personnel agency. This form of organization, as stated elsewhere in this report, has everywhere been found slow, cumbersome, wasteful, and ineffective in the conduct of administrative duties. . . .

They recommended that:

The Civil Service Commission should be reorganized into a civil service administration, with a single executive officer to be known as the Civil Service Administrator, and a non-salaried Civil Service Board. . . . This Board would be charged not with administrative duties but with the production and development of the merit system. . . . The Civil Service Administrator would take over the functions and activities of the present Civil Service Commission. . . .

This proposal was hotly debated in the late 1930's. Though it passed the United States Senate, it was rejected by the House of Representatives along with the other reorganization plans submitted at that time by the President. Fear was expressed that the one-man administrator could not provide sufficient protection against political abuses.

The Hoover Commission attempted to reconcile the merits of a single administrator and a bipartisan commission. As the President stated in transmitting Reorganization Plan No. 5 to Congress:

The development and promulgation of civil service regulations for the guidance of the departments and agencies under the civil service, and the conduct of hearings on matters appealed by individuals or departments are appropriate for a three-member bipartisan Commission. Here deliberation is important for the protection of the integrity of the civil service system.

On the other hand, the administrative direction of the day-to-day operations of the Commission's staff requires the unified leadership of one responsible individual. This is particularly so because of the operating relationships with the departments and agencies. Here decisive, prompt, and vigorous action is essential.

Under this Reorganization Plan, which has been in effect since August, 1949, the Chairman became "chief executive and administrative officer of the Commission,"

fully in charge of its daily administrative operations. The full Commission remains responsible for recommending proposed legislation and rules to the President, for approving all regulations and other policy matters, adjudicating appeals, preventing pernicious political activity, revising and submitting budget estimates, and "the investigation of all matters pertaining to the administration of the functions of the Commission or Chairman." The plan also established an Executive Director, appointed by the Chairman from the competitive service, who acts as deputy to the Chairman and for internal administrative purposes serves in the Chairman's stead during his absence or disability. The Executive Director may not, however, sit as an acting member of the Commission.

In my judgment, this plan has worked successfully. It has speeded up decisions. It has toned up the Commission's operations without sacrificing the careful bipartisan considerations of policy questions and individual appeals which help to protect and sustain public confidence in the merit system. Under the Chairman's direction, the Commission has greatly speeded up the examining process, reducing substantially the elapsed time between the closing dates of examinations and the establishment of registers. The Commission's regulations and instructions to the agencies which are issued in the Federal Personnel Manual are being simplified and drastically reduced in length. These are examples of the management improvements which the Chairman has initiated since taking office.

Classification and Pay

As its first recommendation on personnel management, the Hoover Commission proposed that the "Civil Service Commission should place primary emphasis on staff functions rather than upon processing a multitude of personnel transactions." This prevailing theme of the Hoover Report proposes, actually, a continuation of the trend to which the Commission has been committed since the war. Position-classification provides a good example. In its Annual Report for 1947, which antedated the

Hoover Report, the Commission recommended that:

The Classification Act of 1923 should be completely revised (a) so as to provide for the establishment of compensation schedules by grades only instead of by both services and grades, (b) so as to place upon the Civil Service Commission the responsibility for the development of standards under which jobs are to be classified, with the requirement that the heads of departments and agencies must classify their jobs in accordance with these standards, subject to post-audit by the Commission, and (c) so as to clearly set forth the factors which are to be taken into consideration in classifying jobs.

This proposal was endorsed by the Hoover Commission. The Classification Act of 1949, which embodied these principles, was the culmination of years of effort by the Commission. Special credit goes to Ismar Baruch, Chief of our Personnel Classification Division. His knowledgeable advice and skillful legislative draftsmanship helped to frame a sound bill which was approved by both Houses of Congress.

The "Model T" Classification Act of 1923, which was a fine vehicle in its day, was not meeting the needs of our modern era. Positions under that act were divided into five services and forty-five grades. The allocation of individual positions in the Washington area had to be approved by the Commission before they became effective. This entailed a heavy burden of paper work. Positions in the field were allocated by the agencies according to standard specifications issued by the Commission. Though these field allocations were postaudited by the Commission, we had no effective means of requiring compliance by the agencies.

The Act of 1949 simplified the classification system, strengthened the Commission's authority, and established uniform treatment for positions in Washington and the field. The five services under the old act were consolidated into two, and the number of grades was reduced from 45 to 28. The Commission now issues standard class specifications, the agencies allocate positions according to these standards, and the Commission enforces them through a postaudit review. Any employee may appeal the allocation of his position. The Commission, pursuant to an appeal or as

the result of its own review, may correct improper allocations of individual positions. If necessary, we may revoke the authority to allocate positions of any agency which repeatedly violates the Commission's standards and require that all proposed allocations in that agency be submitted to the Commission for prior approval. Thus, the same act which vests in the agencies authority to allocate positions places strong enforcement powers in the Commission.

This act introduces the factor of length of service into the federal pay system. Employees in lower- and middle-grade positions who have been in grade for at least ten years, three of them at the highest step in their grade, are eligible for as many as three longevity increases at intervals of three years if their efficiency ratings are good or better. These additional pay steps are rewards for faithful service to employees in what were formerly dead-end positions.

Though the act yielded only minor pay increases to most federal employees, it established three higher grades beyond those previously authorized. General Service grade 18, at a \$14,000 salary, is now the summit of the federal career service. The positions in this grade are allocated by the President on recommendation of the Civil Service Commission. The positions in grade GS-17, at a salary range from \$12,200 to \$13,000, and in grade GS-16, from \$11,200 to \$12,000, are allocated by the Civil Service Commission after recommendation by the agencies. The compensation available to higher career officials has thus been brought more closely into line with the heavy responsibility they carry.

Shortly before the passage of the Classification Act, Congress enacted a long overdue adjustment in the salaries of cabinet officers and approximately 200 other non-career Presidential appointees. Department heads were raised from \$15,000 to \$22,500 and other Presidential appointees received proportionate increases.

The career service has recently been strengthened by the establishment of the post of permanent Assistant Secretary for

Administration in several departments. This measure was recommended by the Hoover Commission and was incorporated into reorganization plans which recently took effect. These high positions have been placed in the competitive service definitely within the reach of career employees. They will provide an important element of continuity in top management and assure greater attention in higher circles to the problems of administration.

Efficiency Ratings

THE COMMISSION has not been satisfied with the service rating methods commonly used in government, and we have been searching for new ideas to improve the rating process. Recently we developed and introduced on a trial basis among our own employees a new performance rating system which we feel is a substantial improvement over the method previously in use.³

The Hoover Commission proposed that (1) the present uniform efficiency rating system be scrapped and replaced by "ability and service record" ratings based on annual evaluation of the employee by his supervisor including a personal conference where the employee's strengths and weaknesses would be fully discussed, and (2) these ratings should not be used as a basis for personnel actions such as within-grade increases and reduction-in-force as existing law requires.

The Classification Act of 1949 did not revise the present efficiency rating plan, which includes a complex system of appeals. Instead, the new act directed the Commission to study the problem further and submit a plan by February, 1950, to improve the efficiency rating system.

Accordingly, the Commission has recommended fundamental changes in the rating system. The desirability of a uniform rating system which the present law requires was specifically rejected. In our opinion, no agency should be required, against its will, to have a formal system of performance evaluation. Instead, each agency which feels that a rating system will

contribute to good administration should work out a plan or series of plans to suit its own special needs. The Commission should provide leadership to the agencies in working out and evaluating performance rating plans and should approve them individually before they become effective. These general standards should apply:

1. Such plans should provide for practical methods of developing, between employees, supervisors, and administrators, a mutual understanding of proper standards of work performance and securing actual performance in relation to such standards.

2. Arbitrary controls of rating judgments are undesirable. Performance requirements and performance results are factual matters and should be expressed and reviewed on a factual basis where possible.

3. Performance evaluations should be made on a periodic basis, at least annually, and should cover past performance and progress. Summary ratings should not be required.

4. Evaluations may permit recognition of outstanding performance, as well as satisfactory performance and performance that is not satisfactory. A supervisor who evaluates an employee "Unsatisfactory" should be required to state in writing the reasons for the rating, the means he proposes to secure improvement in the performance of the employee, and his grounds for believing that such improvement is likely. The same procedure should be followed when evaluating an employee "Outstanding." The supervisor should be required to make a factual written statement showing in what particular respects the employee's performance has been really outstanding. No written report should be required where the employee meets the standards of performance established for his position.

5. Methods should not be too rigid. Flexibility is desirable in order to arrive at appropriate evaluations under unusual circumstances.

The rating process should provide an occasion for the supervisor and employee frankly to compare the employee's performance with the requirements of his job and to work out methods of improvement. Summary ratings which label the employee as an individual inhibit both the supervisor and employee in these discussions and consequently undermine the constructive value of the rating process. The same applies when performance ratings are used as the sole basis for personnel actions of any kind. The Commission has therefore concluded that "although periodic performance appraisals may provide information useful in determining appropriate personnel policies and later actions, we are

³ Handbook S-80g, "The Civil Service Commission's New Performance Rating System," is available at the U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington 25, D.C.

of the opinion that summary performance ratings should not be used as the sole basis for any personnel actions." Therefore the present laws requiring the use of ratings for within-grade salary advances and other purposes should be repealed. When these laws are repealed, there will be no further justification for the present cumbersome system of efficiency rating appeals which consume a great deal of time and often aggravate differences between employees and supervisors. The Commission suggests, however, that one impartial review of an employee's performance evaluation be available within the agency.

It is not likely that all of these recommendations will be accepted by the Congress in the immediate future, but we are confident that some improvement in the law governing performance evaluation will be forthcoming.⁴ These long-range proposals point up the growing importance of the Commission's new leadership role in the personnel field.

Examining

THE COMMISSION was created in 1883 as an examining agency. Though we have grown greatly and many other vital functions have been added to our responsibilities as the central personnel agency of the federal government, examining remains our bellwether. We have been working steadily with the departments and agencies to improve both the procedural and technical sides of the vast program of staffing the federal service.

We have successfully adapted electrical accounting machines and punch-card methods to many of the large-scale routine clerical operations incidental to our examining and certifying procedure. Machine methods are now used extensively in:

1. Rating assembled examinations
2. Averaging examinations
3. Establishing registers
4. Compiling data required for test validation

These machine operations are quicker,

cheaper, and more accurate than the hand methods previously used. They have helped us to reduce the time between the closing date of examinations and the establishment of registers for use by the operating agencies. We intend to experiment further with machine methods in the hope that one day all of our routine clerical work may be performed by machines.

Late in 1949 the Commission initiated an intensive research program in search of methods to improve some of our basic examining processes. Our regional offices too have been participating in this program. There are seven main subjects of investigation:

1. *Qualifications investigations.* What are the most successful methods of securing information about the qualifications of applicants through personal investigations?
2. *Qualifications vouchers or questionnaires.* Do qualifications questionnaires yield valid information? How can they be improved?
3. *Examining specifications.* What are the most valid and economical methods of preparing standards? What principles should be followed in determining the content of examinations?
4. *Circularizing eligibles.* Does it eliminate from the registers people who would decline appointment if offered? Under what conditions does it justify the cost?
5. *Oral examinations.* What do they produce? How can they best be adapted to the public service?
6. *Written and performance tests.* To what new fields can they be profitably extended?
7. *Examination announcements.* How can their format and language be improved and their public appeal be increased without raising costs?

The most significant development in our examining work has been the great expansion in written testing. We are convinced that suitable written tests can be developed for positions requiring high qualifications, mature judgment, and experience. We now have written tests not only for entering level jobs but for many in the middle and higher grades, and we intend to cover more and more positions. Written examinations now cover such positions as Social Worker through grade 13 (\$7,600), Claims Investigator, GS-12, Psychologist, GS-9, Organization and Methods Examiner and Budget Examiner, GS-9. For some of the highest grade accountant and investigator positions, written tests are being used as one of a battery of selection

⁴On September 22, 1950, H.R. 7824 was sent to President Truman for signature. This law, to be known as "The Performance Rating Act of 1950," provides that federal departments shall set up their own efficiency rating plans, subject to inspection by and approval of the Civil Service Commission. The bill includes many of the proposals discussed above.

devices. Tests for administrators in the highest grades have been furnished to other government agencies and used successfully in their promotion programs.

A noteworthy trend is the increasing use of questions which test the competitor's judgment about the solution of problems. With the help of expert consultants, we are able to present real problems drawn from their experience in many agencies. In these questions the competitor is called on to pick the best of the suggested solutions. The best answer does not necessarily suggest the only right way to handle the problem nor is it the best of all possible answers. The official key for such tests depends on the well-considered judgment of our expert consultants. This is, of course, familiar to psychologists as the multiple-choice type of test item.

One of the most important examinations for the government agencies interested in developing future administrative leaders is the Junior Management Assistant examination. It consists of a difficult aptitude test and a test on administrative judgment. This latter test attempts to measure broad understanding of administrative problems common to all large organizations. The test is the result of five years of validation work by the Civil Service Commission in the field of administrative judgment. It has been enthusiastically received by the agencies. Extensive follow-up studies are planned to determine the effectiveness of all the selection methods used in this examination.

Examinations for law enforcement positions offer a further illustration of the use of tests requiring judgment and analysis. These examinations also embody aptitude tests of memory and the verbal facility required for successful report writing.

Since the war there has been a great increase in the use of tests measuring the basic abilities which make for success in a wide variety of jobs. Aptitude tests offer two great advantages. The first applied in the period of conversion from war service to probational appointments where people already doing the work had to be examined along with those who claimed they could do it better if given an equal op-

portunity. Aptitude tests provided a fair and uniform basis of competition. Their second great advantage is economy of operation. Their use can minimize the burden of construction and simultaneously provide test material for a great variety of jobs. Not only do we provide the examination material simultaneously but we often hold the varied examinations at the same time making due allowance in rating for various combinations and weightings of the tests.

Aptitude tests, as well as achievement tests, will be found in our new program for the selection of physical scientists, engineers and mathematicians. Upon recommendation of the President's Scientific Research Board, the Commission started extensive studies in 1947 of the best means of selecting these specialists. The work is still continuing, for the problem of measuring ability to perform creative research work does not lend itself to quick or easy solutions.

Progress has also been made in the development of written tests for such low-grade positions as skilled and semi-skilled laborers of which there are a great many in government. Highly satisfactory results have been obtained. The testing problems posed by these jobs have been more difficult of solution in some ways than those presented by extremely high-grade jobs. Test material must be understandable to the applicants, difficult enough for competitive testing, and easy enough for all the applicants who might turn in a fine day's work on the job.

Increasingly, we are using items which do not require skill with words. Some of them require the competitors to demonstrate that their hands and eyes will work together in good coordination, that they can perceive the similarities and differences in pictured objects, that they can understand the relationships of the parts to the whole of two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects, and visualize changing relationships of the objects. Generally, these tests are well received. The fact that we have demonstrated their value before putting them into use contributes to the acceptance of question forms which can

not always have the appearance of practicality.

We have already used a written test for unskilled positions in the Government Printing Office and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. It was taken by over 5,000 competitors. The results were satisfactory both from the standpoint of personnel selection and prompt and economical service to the employing agencies. Aptitude tests not requiring skill with words have also worked very well in selecting appointees to semi-skilled laborer positions as assistants to the printers operating the presses at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Aptitude tests are also selecting card punch machine operators working on data gathered in the current census.

This brief account can barely suggest some of the most important developments in our postwar testing program. Some of them have been described fully by members of our staff elsewhere.⁵

Staff Development

IT IS NOT enough that we improve our methods of staffing the federal service. We must also do a better job of helping to develop to their full potential those already on the rolls. The agencies, of course, are primarily responsible for the development and placement of employees, but the Commission can contribute expert knowledge and leadership. This point has been stressed both by the Hoover Commission and the President's Committee on Management Improvement. Since our activities in this area are also discussed elsewhere,⁶ I shall mention only the highlights.

Our government-wide internship program has provided opportunities for many able junior employees through planned ro-

tating assignments to broaden their experience and prepare for higher positions.⁷ A number of agencies have set up similar programs within their organizations.

After consultation with the agencies and with employee organizations, the Commission issued a set of standards to guide the agencies in setting up and operating promotion systems. Each agency program will be tailored to its own needs and no specific promotion techniques or procedures will be required in any program. They must conform to the following standards:

1. In the development of the promotion program, employees shall be consulted on appropriate aspects of the program.
2. The promotion program shall be stated in writing and made available to all employees.
3. The program shall provide for the use of broad areas of selection in considering employees within the agency for promotion. Attention shall also be given to the qualifications of individuals outside the agency who might be available in order to insure that the best qualified persons will be selected according to merit.
4. Advice and assistance shall be available to employees interested in developing themselves for promotion.
5. Qualification requirements for promotion shall be realistic in terms of the kind and quality of work to be performed, and shall be not less than the standards agreed to by the Civil Service Commission.
6. The same standards for evaluating qualifications shall be equitably applied within the area of selection to all interested employees who meet the minimum requirements for promotion.
7. The promotion program shall provide for release of employees selected for promotion.

The Commission has recently encouraged agencies to enter into executive development agreements with us which will enable them to assign employees freely across the various lines of administrative work. We hope that through these agreements we may remove the curse of excessive specialization which has hampered the development of administrative leadership in recent years. Under such an agreement, a budget officer, for example, could be moved into a personnel position in order to broaden his experience even though he does not meet the standards usually required for personnel work. The

⁵ Albert P. Maslow, "Written Tests to Select and Place Skilled and Unskilled Workers," *Public Personnel Review*, April, 1950. Among the several articles on administrative and management testing published by Milton Mandell, I suggest the ones in *Public Personnel Review*, October, 1946, and October, 1948; and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, June, 1950. Mr. Mandell has also reported on our work in testing scientists and engineers in *Personnel* for January, 1950; *Personnel Psychology*, Spring 1950; and *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Winter 1948.

⁶ Stephen P. Ryder, "Commission Leadership in Staff Development Programs," *Personnel Administration*, September, 1950.

⁷ J. Henry Brown, Jr., "The Federal Administrative Intern Program," *Public Personnel Review* January, 1950.

agencies have also been urged to extend the same principle to professional and scientific employees so that they may be assigned to administrative positions in preparation for eventual promotion to high level positions in their specialties. The Commission has already concluded executive development agreements with the Departments of Agriculture and the Navy.

We are convinced that the federal government must do more to plan systematically for its career leadership. This must be a cooperative undertaking between the Commission and agencies. We have recently appointed a Director of Executive Development Programs who will work closely with the agencies, assisting them in evaluating their immediate and long-range leadership needs and setting up suitable development programs. He will also help to establish a government-wide placement system and conference program for high level personnel. The systematic development of career leadership, at long last, has begun to receive the attention it deserves.

Next Steps

THE NEXT steps in the improvement of federal personnel administration cannot be definitely forecast at this time in the light of world conditions and their impact on the public service. More than ever, however, it is important that we use the best management methods that are available to us.

There are many problem areas where results to date have been meager, even unsatisfactory. In some respects we have much to learn from progressive industrial concerns, universities, local and state agencies, and foreign governments. More of our resources in the future should be devoted to applied research in testing, personnel management, and human relations. More attention should be given to employee safety and health and to physical working conditions. We shall continue to improve both in our staff and our operating activities, which have already been discussed. We are also working on other subjects. One of these is training. We have endorsed the Hoover Commission recommendation that Congress

... make it possible for the executive branch to

provide for the training of its most promising career employees.

Actually, we believe that agencies must be free to train their employees whenever such training will improve their efficiency and their service to the public. This sounds reasonable enough, yet the federal agencies have, in the past, been hampered in training their employees by the absence of clear legislative authority. We hope that this deficiency will shortly be remedied, thus closing a very serious gap in the federal personnel system.

The Commission should then add to its staff a group of training specialists to help the agencies set up, operate, and evaluate training programs. Moreover, the civilian agencies should be authorized, as the armed forces have for many years, to detail employees on full pay to universities, state and local governments, and industry for advanced specialized training. We further believe that sabbatical periods should be available to highly selected employees for independent study or research of value to the government.

We are not satisfied with the progress of the federal service in employee consultation. The Hoover Commission recommended that:

The heads of departments and agencies should be required to provide for the positive participation of employees in the formulation and improvement of federal personnel policies and practices.

Tremendous resources of knowledge, skill, and judgment remain untapped in the federal agencies. Suggestion systems, cash awards, and similar devices have been widely used in the federal service with indifferent results. What incentives are conducive to enthusiastic employee participation? How can supervisors learn to appreciate the contribution their employees can make and invite their participation? How can machinery for consultation be set up and made to work effectively? These are challenging problems.

Recently the President endorsed a recommendation of his Advisory Committee on Management Improvement that the Commission should "define the nature and scope of agency personnel programs and develop improved operating practices and standards." Our methods men have been working closely with the agencies and the

Bureau of the Budget to develop simplified instructions, procedures, forms, and reports in personnel work. This operation will continue, and necessary paper work will be simplified as much as possible.

Through our inspection program the Commission has been gathering valuable information about the organization and operations of agency personnel offices. Now that the Commission for the first time has been given the responsibility of defining the scope of personnel administration at the agency level, this information will be invaluable. We expect to develop standards against which agency personnel programs and personnel offices can be measured. We have no intention, however, of foisting the dead hand of absolute uniformity on agency personnel operations. We believe, on the contrary, that the various agencies have distinctive problems and that experimentation should be encouraged. Our standards, carefully developed and revised with new experience, will provide general guides by which the agency heads and their personnel officers may evaluate their personnel programs and the operation of their personnel offices. Thus the influence of the Commission as the leader in federal personnel administration will be increasingly felt in the agencies.

Like many observers of public affairs, I have been greatly concerned for many years with the relatively low prestige of public employment in the United States. This condition has improved a great deal in the past twenty years so that many of our most promising young men and women now compete for junior positions in the federal government. Still, we have prominent public figures advising young men and women to avoid government service. Personally, I know of no more challenging, richly rewarding, or honorable career for public spirited citizens than the federal service. Men of all political persuasions, conservative and liberal, argue for efficient government. Without efficient, conscientious, and competent employees, good government is a mirage. In fact, with the scope and complexity of modern government, it is far too dangerous to entrust government operations to second raters.

We have in our country a somewhat skeptical attitude toward government. One unfortunate by-product has been the popular disparagement of government employees as a group. Government employees are too frequently the targets of unwarranted abuse. In my opinion, our democracy can ill afford this luxury. Its effect on recruitment, on morale, on performance and on the standing of government employees is detrimental to our national welfare. It undermines public confidence in our government and benefits only our enemies. The Civil Service Commission, which has been dedicated to good government, intends to do whatever it can to raise the prestige of public employment and see that the American people get a fair view of the great opportunities which government service offers and of the fine accomplishments of their employees. We have made progress but much too slowly.

Conclusion

EACH PERIOD in history brings forth new problems, often without eliminating the old ones. In the past decade the Commission has piloted the merit system from the prewar to the wartime service, from war to reconversion, and recently from reconversion to the cold war. We are now confronted with the grim facts of the Korean situation and whatever lies beyond. The proper use of manpower in military and civilian activities is a key factor to the successful solution of our national and international problems. The test of a vigorous institution is its ability to adapt readily to new and increasingly complex requirements. By our recent record, the Commission and the federal agencies have demonstrated the remarkable flexibility of the merit system and the great contribution it can make to efficient, democratic government under a great variety of conditions.

From each of these experiences much has been learned, but the lessons of one period cannot provide all the answers to the next. We are moving in new directions. As we plow new ground, we intend further to develop our leadership in personnel matters, not only in the federal service but throughout the country. We must inspire a public service worthy of the role our nation is destined to fulfill.

The Commissioner's Role in Public Personnel Administration . . . PAUL G. STEINBICKER

MANY THOUSANDS of words have been written, and probably to some degree have also been read, concerning the proper organizational pattern for a public personnel agency. The tenor of these writings has not always been sympathetic to including a part-time civil service commission in the machinery of a public personnel agency. Nevertheless it is an essential part of the organization of an overwhelming majority of the public personnel agencies now in existence, both at the state and local levels, and the agencies established in recent years continue to provide for a part-time commission. One may therefore justifiably conclude that the part-time civil service commission has now attained a fixed and permanent place in the organization of public personnel agencies in the United States. Because this is so, it would seem to be entirely appropriate to attempt an analysis, in terms as clear and precise as possible, of the proper role for the civil service commission in the over-all field of public personnel administration.

Setting for the Commissioner's Work

ACCORDING to an analysis of the length of service of commissioners in a number of jurisdictions, undertaken by Mosher and Kingsley about ten years ago, the average commissioner serves less than four years.¹ Assuming that this situation still generally prevails, it would seem that the best approach to a study of the commission's role is in terms of the newly appointed commissioner. If he is typical of

the species, he comes to his new assignment in a mixed frame of mind. Usually, he will be a man of some prominence in his community, identifiable as a civic leader, have a fine record of achievement, and be associated in the public mind with plans and programs for civic betterment. Usually, too, he will be already a busy man. Highly conscious of the importance of effective personnel administration in the public service, he is ordinarily not quite certain just what his own role is to be. Though he is a man of wide experience, he recognizes that he is not a specialist in all the intricate ramifications of personnel management. Hence, it is not too uncommon for the new commissioner to commence his assignment with the double question: Just what am I supposed to do, and how can I best learn to do it?

Unfortunately, there is no pat answer to his question. In the first place, no two civil service jurisdictions operate under identical statutory provisions, and the responsibilities and powers assigned to the part-time commission will differ. In the second place, and perhaps even more important, each jurisdiction develops, altogether independently of the similarity or dissimilarity in legal foundations, a certain "unwritten law," a certain atmosphere or traditional pattern of relationships unique to that jurisdiction. Careful investigation in any public personnel agency will usually reveal that, in actual practice, the personnel function is carried out in ways unknown to the law, though not contrary to it. This is true of any dynamic, human organization; witness, for example, the strict legal prescriptions as contrasted with the actual procedures of electing the President of the United States. In the third place, as already suggested, students of the subject have not yet reached a complete agreement as to the proper role of the part-time commission in public personnel administration. How-

¹ William E. Mosher and J. Donald Kingsley, *Public Personnel Administration* (Rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), pp. 64-67.

● PAUL G. STEINBICKER is Chairman of the Department of Government at St. Louis University. He was also one of the civil service commissioners about whom he writes, having served on the Missouri State Civil Service Commission for several years.

ever, it must be pointed out that there is developing, among the more progressive agencies, a greater and greater area of consensus, both in theory and in practice, concerning the place of the commission in the over-all task.

The above reservations make clear that no final answer can be made to the new commissioner as to just what his role will be. But they also suggest how he might most appropriately orientate himself to his new responsibilities, whatever the jurisdiction to which he is attached.

Knowledge the Commissioner Must Acquire

It is, of course, of primary importance that every member of the commission become thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the law or ordinance under which he is to serve. At the very least, this law or ordinance provides the basic framework within which the commission must function. Beyond that, it may include considerable detailed material, setting out the respective powers and responsibilities of the commission, the full-time personnel director, and the administrative officials in the operating departments. Furthermore, it is necessary for the members of the commission to be acquainted with any judicial interpretations of the law, for words and phrases take on meaning only in the light of such rulings.

But the new commissioner needs to do more than learn the legal provisions of his own city or state merit system. He must also, if he is to function effectively, acquaint himself with the traditions, the "unwritten laws," the customs peculiar to his own jurisdiction, especially as they affect the place of the commission in the picture. This is not a learning assignment which can be completed in a few hours or days, or even weeks. It is more often a matter of months, or even years. A new senator or representative is in much the same position. To a large degree, his role is determined by the unwritten customs and traditions which over the years have gradually crystallized into an established pattern. There are two very effective ways for the new commissioner to acquire the necessary

knowledge in this field. The first is to spend some time poring over past records. By doing this the new commissioner may learn, for example, that the budget estimates for the personnel agency are left almost entirely to the personnel director and that the commission's approval is merely a formality. Or he may learn just the opposite—that the commission insists on playing a very positive part in every stage of budget-making. To offer another illustration, he may discover that, in practice, all direct contacts with the chief executive are made by the director rather than the commission; or he may discover precisely the opposite. Or again, he may find that, traditionally, all examination schedules require commission approval. Contrariwise, he may learn that the commission resolutely refuses to have anything to do with any phase of the examination program. A second way in which the new commissioner may develop "know-how" in connection with the customs of his agency is by personal contacts, not merely with his colleagues on the commission, but with the director, other staff members, operating officials, members of the legislative body, the chief executive, civic, and even political leaders. To a large degree, such contacts will develop in the natural course of events, but it might be desirable for the new commissioner to devote extra hours, early in his term of office, to getting acquainted with all the people who have anything to do, either officially or unofficially, with the operation of the personnel program. Only in this way can he acquire valuable bits of information concerning the *actual* place of the commission in the over-all picture. For instance, he may thus find out that, because of the long and outstanding record of a particular senator, or councilman, the latter must first be "sold" if any proposed changes in the law are to have a chance of enactment. Or again, he may be surprised to discover that the personnel officer of one of the operating agencies is actually the dominant figure in all the affairs of the agency, and the commission therefore always bypasses the over-all administrator in its relations with that agency. These are merely illustrations,

which might be multiplied almost infinitely. At any rate, it should be clear that the new commissioner cannot adequately realize his own position, or do his most effective work, until he develops a fair understanding of the actual working relationships which have evolved in his particular jurisdiction.

But there is more to it than this. No commission is completely effective if its members play a merely passive role, accepting entirely the existing legal framework and the established customs and traditions of their own agency. A full and positive role for the commission must also include the responsibility for evaluating this framework and these customs, in terms of the principles and practices of other public personnel agencies, and then actively seeking a change where such is indicated. Thus, if he is to have any sound basis upon which to evaluate his own jurisdiction, the civil service commissioner must familiarize himself, in so far as practicable, with the legal provisions and working relationships in many other jurisdictions.

In this writer's view, the most effective available means for fulfilling this responsibility is through active collaboration with the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada. It is hardly necessary here to recount all the facilities of the Assembly which might be helpful to commission members. Specifically, two proposals are offered. First, every commissioner would find it very profitable to make a personal visit, early in his term, to the Assembly headquarters in Chicago. There, with the help of the staff, he can learn a great deal in a short time, concerning the principles and practices generally utilized in public personnel agencies in the United States and Canada that have to do with the role of the commission. Perhaps, if enough response were indicated, it might be possible for the Assembly to offer one- or two-day institutes, at periodic intervals, for commissioners. The second proposal is that commission members attend, and participate in, the annual conferences of the Assembly. No educational device can adequately substitute for the direct personal contacts, especially with members of other

commissions, which can be made at these annual conferences. In this writer's experience as a commissioner, nothing else offers so much in the way of acquiring fuller information or of receiving finer stimulation. Invariably, it has been time well spent. Every public personnel agency could benefit greatly by having its commissioners regularly attend these conferences, as can be amply demonstrated in the experience of those who have already done so.

An Analysis of the Commissioner's Role in Missouri

AT THIS point an analysis of the role of the the commissioners in a typical jurisdiction is in order. Such an analysis may serve to illustrate the basic principles, the standard practices, and some of the problem areas remaining. For several reasons, the State of Missouri seems a justifiable choice for analysis. Its merit system law, like that in many other state and municipal jurisdictions, is largely based on the "model" civil service law prepared by the National Civil Service League and the National Municipal League. This is particularly true with regard to those sections of the law having to do with the commission. The merit system in Missouri was established rather recently and has not yet developed too hard and fixed a crust of custom and tradition; it is still fairly flexible and adaptable. And perhaps most important of all, Missouri is the jurisdiction with which this writer is most familiar.

The State Merit System Act of Missouri, enacted in 1945, accepts the part-time commission as an integral part of the organization for public personnel administration.² It creates, within the State Personnel Division, a Personnel Advisory Board of three members. They are appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, for overlapping six-year terms. Qualifications for appointment are as follows:

The members of the Board shall be citizens of the State, of good character and reputation, and who are known to be in sympathy with the application of merit principles to public employment. In order to be eligible for appointment and tenure

² *Laws of Missouri, 1945* (Jefferson City, Mo.), pp. 1160-61.

as a member of the Board, no appointee shall during his term of office, or for at least one year prior thereto, be a member of any local, state, or national committee of a political party or an officer or member of a committee in any partisan political club or organization, or shall hold, or be a candidate for, any elective office.

Board members are removable by the Governor, but only for cause and after written notice with opportunity for a public hearing. They are paid fifteen dollars for each day devoted to the work of the Board, with a maximum of five hundred dollars a year. Board meetings can be called by the Chairman, the Governor, or the Personnel Director. At least one official meeting must be held every three months. (Actually, there have been regular monthly meetings since 1946.)

The law sets out the duties of the Board in terms practically identical with those in other jurisdictions which have utilized the "model" civil service law:

In addition to the duties imposed upon it elsewhere in this act, it shall be the duty of the Board:

1. To represent the public interests in the improvement of public personnel administration in the State.
2. To advise the Governor and the Director on problems concerning personnel administration.
3. To advise and assist the Director in fostering the interest of institutions of learning, civic, professional, and employee organizations in the improvement of personnel standards in the public service.
4. To make any investigation which it may consider desirable concerning the administration of personnel subject to this act.
5. To make annual reports, and such special reports as it considers desirable, to the Governor and General Assembly regarding personnel administration in the State service and recommendations for the improvement thereof.

Elsewhere in the act, several other important duties and powers are assigned to the Board. They include the following:

1. To prescribe such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the act as it deems suitable and necessary to carry out the act.
2. To adopt, on the recommendation of the Director, a classification plan and a pay plan and any amendments thereto.
3. To hear and decide appeals from persons taking examinations and from employees demoted, suspended, or dismissed. In all such actions, the decision of the Board in matters of fact is final.
4. To subpoena witnesses, and compel the production of books and papers pertinent to any investigation or hearing authorized by the act.

The act also creates the office of Director, places it under the merit system, and makes its occupant the "executive head" of the Division, who "shall direct and supervise all its administrative and technical activities." Other specific duties are imposed upon the Director by the Act. He must attend all Board meetings and act as Secretary to the Board; establish and maintain a roster of all classified employees, direct the activities of the Personnel Division and its staff; develop, in cooperation with the appointing authorities, training and educational programs; prepare, for recommendation to the Board, the classification and pay plans and any amendments to those plans; administer the entire recruiting and examination program; maintain registers of eligibles and make certifications therefrom; check all personnel actions for conformity with the law; and certify payrolls. Rather curiously, the Director is given two additional powers which are practically identical with those of the Board. They are the powers: (1) to investigate from time to time the operation and effect of the law and of the rules and to report the findings and recommendations to the Board and the Governor, and (2) to make annual reports regarding the work of the Division and such special reports as he considers desirable to the Board, the General Assembly, and the Governor. Only in connection with these two duties is there any overlapping between the functions of the Board and those of the Director.

The basic intent of the Missouri Merit System Act is fairly typical of the merit system laws and ordinances in other jurisdictions. Quite clearly, the Director is made the "executive" head of the personnel agency. He, and not the Board, is to "direct and supervise all its administrative and technical activities." Just as clearly, the law assigns to the part-time Board only those functions which have come to be known in the jargon of political scientists as "quasi-legislative" and "quasi-judicial." In other words, the responsibilities assigned to the Board are much more akin to those of legislatures and courts than to those ordinarily regarded as appropriate to the executive branch. For example, the

Board's power to make and adopt rules and regulations under the law clearly partakes of the nature of lawmaking. In the same way, its investigative power is much like that of our legislative bodies, though, as has been pointed out, the Director is given the same power. Also, its authority to adopt, on the recommendation of the Director, the classification and pay plans, and any amendments thereto, is at least remotely comparable to the advice and consent power of the Senate with regard to appointments and treaties. Its duty to represent the public interest in the improvement of public personnel administration, commonly assigned to part-time commissions in other jurisdictions, is also "quasi-legislative." It seems to come closest to a grant of authority to act as an inside lobby for the public as a whole—surely not an undesirable sort of lobby. In principle at least, this can be regarded properly as one of the responsibilities of our regularly constituted legislative bodies. Its responsibility to hear and decide appeals arising in connection with examinations and disciplinary personnel actions is, of course, essentially judicial.

Within this basic legal framework, the Personnel Advisory Board has developed, during the past five years, a fairly well-defined role, and one which, it is hoped, conforms both to the letter and the spirit of its own law and to the basic principles of effective public personnel administration.

Commission Relations with the Personnel Division

THE LAW itself, following the terms of the draft civil service law, limits the role of the Board very narrowly in relation to the staff of the Personnel Division itself. The Director is authorized to appoint, in accordance with the merit system provisions of the law, the employees of the Division, and to direct their activities. Hence the Board has no direct authority or responsibility for administering the merit system office itself. Aside from friendly greetings to staff members at the time of the Board's meetings, and the warm social relationships that develop at Christmas parties, the Board has not had any direct contacts with staff members. Scrupulously—and properly—it has

left the staffing of the Division and the supervision of its activities, to the Director. Once each year, however, the Board has inserted itself into the management of the Division. This has been in connection with the annual budget estimates for the Division. Prepared by the Director, these estimates are customarily submitted to the Board for their consideration and approval before being transmitted to the State Budget Office. The Board has taken its responsibilities in this connection quite seriously—requiring detailed and exhaustive justification by the Director for each item in his estimates. Questions are asked, and answered, concerning the need for each position, why it is classified as it is, whether any salary increases are contemplated during the coming year, whether more adequate quarters can be secured at less rent, and so on. Perhaps the Board has been unduly querulous in respect to the budget estimates, but it has thus far always had the satisfaction of really knowing *why* it approved what it did and of being able to defend the estimates wherever and whenever defense was required.

Of vital importance to any personnel operation is the relationship between the board or commission on one hand, and the director or executive officer on the other. In Missouri, it is believed that this relationship has developed properly and effectively, with certain identifiable exceptions. Both Board members and the Director recognize their common basic objective—the betterment of the public service. By keeping this objective constantly in mind, friction has been practically nonexistent, and the relationship essentially one of mutual trust and respect.

As already noted, the Board is given the sole power to adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary to carry out the purposes of the law. This legal prescription might suggest independent and exclusive action on the part of the Board, but the practice has developed otherwise. Rarely, if ever, has the Board taken the initiative in adopting or amending a rule or regulation. Most often, rule changes have been initiated by the Director, as the result of practical experience. Frequently, also, operating officials, employee representa-

tives, and the Governor have proposed changes. In every case, however, before the prescribed public hearing was held, the Board and the Director would meet, discuss, analyze, debate, argue, and sometimes haggle until complete agreement was reached as to whether *any* rule change was needed. If so, how much, in what direction, and by what phraseology. Thus, at the public hearing itself, the Board members and the Director always presented a united front, though not a closed mind. Oftentimes, after the public hearing, the Board and Director, meeting again in executive session, would agree that certain worthwhile proposals had developed at the hearing and that such proposals deserved adoption. At no time, however, in the process was there *any* public difference of opinion revealed between Board and Director. Also, at no time was a rule change made until there was a meeting of minds.

One aspect of Board-Director relations that caused a bit of difficulty involved amendments to the classification and pay plans. The law gives the Board final authority to approve such amendments, on the recommendation of the Director. In the normal course, the need for a new class or for revisions of existing classes would first become apparent in the operating agency concerned. Thereafter, the Personnel Director and his staff would be brought into the picture, and a considerable amount of technical work in position-classification or job evaluation would follow, eventuating usually in agreement among the operating agency, the technicians on the staff of the Personnel Division, and the Director. Thereupon, the recommended and agreed-upon revisions would be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting. There the Director explained, in terms as clear as he could, what the revision involved, why it was necessary, and how it would affect operations. He would be followed by operating agency representatives with their own explanations. Whereupon the Board members, and most particularly this writer, having faithfully studied the proposed revisions for several days, would feel impelled to ask what they hoped were "searching" questions. Sometimes the questions were relevant, sometimes not.

Oftentimes they involved aspects and details of administration which were really no concern of the Board. The results were invariably delay, oftentimes arguments and fraying of professional nerves, and sometimes the offering of a broad hint by operating officials or the Director that the Board was impinging on "administrative responsibility." Even so, the Board members felt that, if they were given the power finally to adopt or reject amendments to the classification and pay plans, they also had the responsibility to make a serious and painstaking study of the proposals before acting on them. In general, the situation could be compared to one wherein a group of laymen had final authority to pass upon the decisions previously reached by a commission of engineers for the location, type of construction, and pay of the workers on bridge-building projects. Looking back upon it, I believe that whatever good may have come out of such an arrangement was overbalanced by the bad effects in delay, friction, and disharmony. The conclusion reached a few years ago by the Director of Rhode Island's Department of Civil Service, that such technical matters as class specifications and pay rates are beyond the province of the part-time commission, appears to be justified.³

To its complete credit, the Board in Missouri has thus far left complete administrative discretion to the Director in connection with all phases of the selection process. In not a single instance has the Board, or any member of it, demanded any part in the recruitment program, or in the construction, administration, or scoring of examinations. It has also quite properly kept hands off in connection with the other technical aspects of the Division's work, such as service ratings, layoff formulas, disciplinary actions, and the like. Only when an appeal is made, concerning any such administrative matter, has the Board become involved, and then its major concern was to give a fair and impartial hearing to all concerned, including the Director. It seems clear that under no circumstances is the part-time commission competent to be of

³ Charles H. Cushman, "Relations Between the Commission and the Executive Officer," *Public Personnel Review*, April, 1947, p. 71.

any real help in connection with such administrative matters as these. If the Director and his staff are themselves incompetent, the solution is to get a Director and a staff who are competent and not to turn the job over to an amateur, part-time board. The right of appeal is ample check on arbitrary action by the Director and his staff.

Commission Relations with Operating Agencies

SO FAR AS relations with the operating agencies are concerned, the Board in Missouri has found no need to develop any great intimacy. Since most of the questions arising between the Personnel Division and the operating agencies involve the technical aspects of personnel administration, such as classification, pay, and allocations, the Board has found it sufficient to notify both the officials and the employee representatives of the operating agencies of all its regular meetings (which are public), and to invite them to bring anything they wish to the Board's attention at such times. Whether Missouri has been more fortunate than other jurisdictions is not known, but the Board has not found it necessary to establish any independent lines of communication between itself and the operating agencies or their employees. Thus far, the full-time staff and the Director of the Personnel Division, in combination with "open house" at all Board meetings, have proved to be entirely adequate to handle all relations with operating agencies.

Commission Relations with the Governor

IN MISSOURI, both the Personnel Director and the members of the Board are appointed by the Governor; hence both are, organizationally speaking, responsible to him as the over-all head of the entire administrative structure of the state. Conceivably, the Board's responsibility and the Director's responsibility to the Chief Executive might result in conflict between the two. Thus far, this has not occurred. Both have followed a policy, since the establishment of the merit system five years ago, of keeping the Governor informed by means of a joint monthly report of their activities. Both have also recognized that their

responsibility to the Chief Executive included the obligation to preserve as much consistency as possible throughout the entire state service. This has involved, on several occasions, meeting with the Governor and other department heads for the purpose of developing a common policy in such areas as pay rates, working hours, and leave regulations to apply both to the classified and the unclassified service. As a general rule, both the Board and the Director, recognizing that the Chief Executive has many heavy responsibilities other than the operation of the merit system, have taken the position that their responsibilities to him are fulfilled by keeping him regularly informed of their activities, and that in other respects, though both the Board and the Director are always available, the initiative in developing further contacts should rest with him. Thus far, this arrangement has proved to be adequate in practice. It might, however, be pointed out that such a "modus vivendi" has worked well in Missouri because of two factors: first, the Chief Executive himself has been entirely cooperative and willing to leave the administration of the merit system to those directly concerned with it; secondly, the merit system law, as originally enacted, has proved to be entirely workable and to need no important amendment. Had the actual situation been different in either of these respects, undoubtedly both the Board and the Director would have found it necessary to assume a more positive role in their relations with the Governor.

Commission Relations with the Legislature

FOR THE SAME REASON, the Board has perhaps neglected to develop its relations with the Legislature to the fullest possible extent. Except for an occasional blast at the merit system, or a frank acknowledgment of a desire for more and thicker "gravy," the membership of the Missouri Legislature has shown no serious intention of destroying the basic legal framework of the merit system. Hence the Board and the Director have not yet found it necessary to work intensively with legislative leaders, either to prevent damaging amendments

or to secure desirable ones. Of course, the law is not perfect, and several times the Board has considered whether or not it should undertake a strenuous effort to persuade the Legislature to make certain minor improvements in the law. Invariably it has decided to let well enough alone. In consequence, relations with the Legislature have all centered around the annual appropriation for the Personnel Division. As already indicated, the Board members play an active role in the development of the budget estimates for the Division and feel qualified to join with the Director in presenting and supporting their estimates before the Appropriations Committees of the two houses by every proper means. Beyond this, the Board members have in general tried their best to assure cordial relations with the legislative leaders of both parties and have even on occasion taken them to dinner. But they have not found it needful to undertake any intensive or formal program to secure legislative support. If or when the legislative attitude toward either the merit system law or the appropriations to administer it should change, undoubtedly the role of the Board vis-a-vis the Legislature would also have to change accordingly.

Commission Relations with the General Public

THE MISSOURI law imposes upon the Board responsibility "to represent the public interests in the improvement of public personnel administration in the States." and "to advise and assist the Director in fostering the interest of institutions of learning, and civic, professional, and employee organizations in the improvement of personnel standards in the public service." If these responsibilities place any specific duties on the Board members other than those already delineated, then clearly the Board in Missouri has been delinquent. Here again is evidence of the difference between what the law proposes and what custom disposes. In Missouri, as in too many other merit system jurisdictions, Board members feel that they are adequately representing the public interest by merely serving as Board members. Generally, they develop no program and undertake no ac-

tivities specifically directed to the cultivation of a broader interest and a deeper appreciation on the part of the public of personnel administration in the public service. Generally, the public relations program of the agency, and its anticipatory recruitment activities in relation to schools, colleges, civic, professional, and employee groups, is left entirely in the hands of the Director. Here is an area, outside the realm of the "technical and administrative," where Board members could, if they would, render yeoman service to the cause of good government. Almost always men of fine civic reputation, known for their disinterestedness in petty affairs, they already possess the public's confidence and are thus in a unique position to open up all the channels of communication with that public. Were Board and Commission members generally to utilize their unique position and take advantage of their opportunity to bring the public and the interest groups of which it is composed into a more intimate relationship with the objectives and methods of public personnel administration, the resultant benefits to the over-all improvement of the public service would be immeasurable. It is to be hoped that the part-time civil service commissioner of the future will give a much larger part of his time to the fulfillment of his responsibilities to the public as a whole.

Conclusions

IN SUMMARY, the part-time civil service commissioner is presented with a fine opportunity to render a service that affords real satisfaction to himself, and promises material benefit to his community. He must, however, if he is to render the maximum possible service from this vantage point, inform himself adequately as to the law of his jurisdiction, its customs and traditions, and the standards and practices in other jurisdictions. He must also recognize that he is not omniscient. His responsibilities, particularly in relation to the staff and the Director of the personnel agency and to the operating agencies, are limited to what may generally be described as policy-making and policy-interpreting. They definitely do not include any techni-

cal or administrative authority, and to the extent that commissioners intrude into these aspects of public personnel administration they fail to adhere to the best practice. In relation to the Chief Executive and the elected legislative representatives, there is a role for the commissioner—the development of informed, sympathetic attitudes, and in so far as need be, full support for a sound, progressive program of personnel administration. Beyond this, the commissioner has a unique, and thus far

not fully used, opportunity to grow deep and enduring roots in public opinion. By and large, in all jurisdictions, the part-time commissioner has been conscious both of his obligations and of his limitations. Some measure, at least, of the credit for the great strides forward already made in public personnel administration in the United States can properly be attributed to the high-minded commissioners of the past. There is every reason to expect a continued share for them in the progress yet to come.

What Is Your Freezing Point?

MEN, like liquids, have a freezing point as well as a boiling point. We readily recognize the latter and say of a certain individual that "he has a low boiling point," which means that on the least provocation he loses his temper. Of another we may say that "he has a high boiling point." We mean that this individual has a very calm disposition, and that his blood doesn't rise to the boiling point at the slightest irritation. But, individuals, like liquids, also have their freezing points. Some, like water, have a high freezing point. Their ideas and habits congeal early in life, and nothing can change them. Others, like the alcohol you put in your radiator, have a low freezing point. Their ideas and habits remain fluid through most of their lives.

Where do you fit? Has your work become a meaningless routine, a job, and nothing more? If so, you have a high freezing point, and 5 o'clock on the clock and Friday evening on the calendar will always mean far more to you than human personality. Your work has become congealed. What began as a thrilling quest and adventure ended as dull and lifeless routine. No new quests! No new adventures! One human face just like another! Just the meaningless repetition of familiar forms, with never the semblance of a fresh idea! Faith frozen!!

This is a persistent trait of human nature, and I think, by and large, spells the difference between success and failure—personally or collectively. Some men reach a certain stature and stop there. But others have the capacity for uninterrupted vision and dedication and growth. They are greater at 40 than at 20, and when they reach 60 the growing processes still outrun the processes of decay. They have a low freezing point.—Rev. Raymond McCallister, in the *American Red Cross Newsletter*.

City Uses Physical Exams as Selection Aid

SAN JOSE, California, requires all employees under 45 years of age to have a physical examination once every three years and all employees over 45 to have one annually. The city has three classes of standards for physical fitness. Employees in Class A are acceptable for any type of work; in Class B for selected types of work. Persons with Class C ratings are employable only with specific approval of the public health officer. This program is particularly useful for protecting employees from selection for jobs for which they are not physically suited.

Establishing a Modern Merit System in Japan FOSTER ROSER

WHEN one thinks of installing a merit system in an organization as large as the government of Japan, with all of its ramifications and involving a million and a half employees, the magnitude of the project alone staggers the imagination.¹ Add to that the additional obstacles of language, Oriental customs, psychology, ideas, and ideologies and you border on an impossible situation.

Pre-War Japanese Government Service

TO GIVE you an awareness of some of the feudalistic practices which were in operation, even as late as 1948, I am going to briefly discuss some of the principal features of the pre-war Japanese government service. Under the Meiji Constitution (1870-1946), each employee from the highest to the lowest in rank was actually or theoretically appointed by the Emperor. In their indoctrination, civil employees were never encouraged to regard themselves as public servants; they spoke for the Emperor. Any "civilian" who objected to an interpretation of the law or the treatment he received was likely to find himself rudely shocked unless he enjoyed ready access to a higher ranking member of the hierarchy.

¹Blaine Hoover, former President of the Civil Service Assembly was appointed by General MacArthur as Chairman of the Personnel Advisory Mission and left for Tokyo in November, 1946. This Mission spent nearly a year making a comprehensive study and report of the then prevailing practices of the Japanese Civil Service. Subsequently Mr. Hoover was appointed Chief of the newly created Civil Service Division and directed the installation and operation of a modern merit system.

• FOSTER B. ROSER is Director of the Flint, Michigan, Civil Service Commission. Mr. Roser spent two years helping set up the examination section for the new Japanese Civil Service System. This article was adapted from a paper presented at the Central Regional Conference of the Civil Service Assembly at Springfield, Illinois in May, 1950.

Classification

THE JAPANESE Civil Service had a classification plan which, by American standards, was both simple and impossible. All employees were allocated to one of five major categories: first, second, and third-class officials, koin or clerks, and yonin or the labor craft service. Generally speaking, first-class officials were the top administrative officials such as bureau chiefs; second-class officials were on a level of section chiefs, while third-class officials covered everything from entrance level jobs for officials to unit chiefs. Koin rank ranged from messenger boy to private secretary.

The Japanese bureaucracy placed great value on rank. Through the years, first, second, and third-class personnel came to be known as "officials," while all others were known as "employees." Employees enjoyed little of the prestige of public service and none of the status or retirement benefits of their public positions. They could never hope to eventually be promoted to the "official" group. Even technicians of the highest ability, if not a product of the "higher" civil service (of which I shall speak later) could hope to reach the top.

Shortly after World War II began, the Japanese instituted a classification plan with sixteen levels or grades. While all positions were allocated to these grades, the allocation criteria utilized was the personal education, experience, and age of the employee rather than the duties and responsibilities involved. The personal rank or level of an employee was not directly related at any time to the work he was doing. This technique resulted in allocating the so-called positions of employees all performing substantially the same type of work in the same organizational unit to a spread of as many as five of the sixteen grades. Obviously it also created the situation in which a third-class official was likely to be allocated to the same grade as a first-

class official. The techniques of job analysis, job description, and the formulation of standard classes were unknown by the Japanese.

Recruitment

NO TESTS, either clerical or manual were given to the koin or yonin employees, except in some instances when an employing officer might give tests of a sort of his own creation. Neither were tests given for the executive and administrative positions, such as office managers, accountants, auditors, and clerical supervisors. This type of personnel was also barred from policy making positions and could rise only to a certain point in the hierarchy. Employees comprised what was known as the "Ordinary Civil Service."

The bureaucracy or the administrative elite of the Japanese Civil Service was an entirely different story. These top-ranking administrative positions were filled through a highly competitive and restricted procedure known as the "Higher Civil Service Examinations." Such examinations were completely under the control of a ninety-man committee composed almost entirely of members of the law faculty of Tokyo Imperial University. This fact alone accounted for several interesting developments. First of all, seventy-five percent of the successful candidates from each examination were Tokyo Imperial graduates. True, graduates from other schools could compete, but their mortality in the examination process was extremely high. Secondly, the examination was entirely legal in character. Subjects covered were constitutional law, administrative law, civil law, commercial law, criminal law, civil procedural law, etc. Questions on public administration, sociology, and psychology have never been included in this examination. Because the Committee cast the entire examination along legal training, candidates studied assiduously for long hours to commit to memory the legal knowledge that was essential to success. In addition, students in college could not afford to enroll in nonlegal courses since it penalized them in the examination by taking precious time away from the all-important legal subjects.

The higher examinations were given annually and were very severe—as an eighty-five percent mortality rate indicates. Of the 3,000 annual candidates, between eighty and eighty-five percent were eliminated in the written section. The small group of survivors was then subjected to an oral test in administrative law, Japanese history, and political economy. Ninety percent of those who passed the written test survived the oral. The elite of the Japanese Civil Service was drawn from the 400 successful candidates per year. Thus, it can be seen that the Japanese bureaucracy was the product of a highly restricted and competitive group who possessed both intelligence and the respect of their colleagues.

Compensation

AN EXAMPLE of how one employee's pay was computed will be the clearest way to illustrate how badly muddled the compensation system was. His total monthly pay of ¥ 16,228 was determined as follows:

Basic Wage	1914
Family Allowance	800
Foreman Allowance	2000
Job Allowance	2000
Ability Allowance	1400
Extraordinary Allowance	8114
Total	¥ 16,228

Allowances covered every conceivable purpose. There were family allowances, cold allowances, area allowances, year-end allowances, and death allowances. A conductor got an allowance for driving a train through a tunnel. Tax collectors received an allowance because they were always the recipients of physical abuse from the citizens.

Pay ranges, although an established feature of the compensation plan, were almost entirely meaningless. The pay range over the years remained unchanged, although older employees in point of service who were receiving the maximum rate, also received additional increases from time to time. Eventually a charwoman could earn considerably more than a newly appointed third-class official, four or five pay levels above her in the pay plan.

Transfers

THERE WAS a high incidence of transfers in the Japanese service, especially in administrative positions. It was not at all uncommon for a man with twenty years of service to have held twenty different positions. While this high rate of changing jobs, by American reasoning, results in administrators never becoming really qualified for any of their assignments, it has developed a peculiar viewpoint in the minds of the Japanese. They reason that with the all-important legal background, the administrator can satisfactorily perform in *any* executive position, regardless of field or specialty. Specific background is not necessary because that requirement is supplied by technicians and subordinates. Otherwise, what is the administrator's purpose in the organization?

Retirement

PRACTICES concerning retirement were extravagant. Employees could, and still can, retire after seventeen years of service at one-third of their final pay. In practice, this means that most administrative officers retire in their forties, forcing them in their middle age to begin new careers in private business. Obviously, they spend their last years in the service cultivating private business contacts, ultimately obtaining comfortable posts in private employment in exchange for public favors arranged through junior colleagues who remain in the service.

Leaves

A COSTLY leave program is also an established policy. The worker is allowed thirty days a year to conduct personal business. He gets ninety days sick leave a year and if he can struggle back for a single day at the termination of that period, he can get an additional ninety days. He annually receives thirty days for vacation plus three days to observe and respect the death of his ancestors. He enjoys ten holidays plus working days from December 29 through January 3 during which he duly observes the arrival of the New Year.

Since there was no central personnel agency in the Japanese service, obviously there was little uniformity of personnel practices. The government was wasteful

and extravagant in the use of its manpower. Departments were overstaffed beyond imagination. Last year a reduction-in-force program resulted in eliminating 178,000 workers from the government service. Even the Japanese admit that with the lack of mechanization, modern management and methods, and work simplification, combined with the employees' lackadaisical attitude, it takes five Japanese to do the equivalent work of one American.

The Modern Era

WE COME now to the period following the work of the Personnel Advisory Mission and the creation of the Civil Service Division. Without question the most important contribution of the Mission was the preparation and submission to the Japanese of the proposed civil service law, later known as the National Public Service Law. In preparing such a proposed law, the natural inclination of Americans is to copy current American civil service legislation. However, the Mission at the outset determined that they would not be committed to any specific preconceived personnel system. Instead, after a thorough study of the Japanese situation they would recommend in so far as possible sound personnel administrative practices adapted to the Japanese ideas, former practices, psychology, and ideologies.

The proposed civil service law was submitted to the Diet in the fall of 1947. Unfortunately, the nucleus of feudalistic, bureaucratic thinking gentlemen within the core of the Japanese Government were astute enough to see the dangers of any such modern public administration law to their tenure and the subsequent loss of their power. The law which was finally passed by the Diet was a thoroughly and completely emasculated instrument compared with that which had been recommended by the Mission. Careful elimination had been made of many essential provisions including a proposed administrative surgical operation on the upper bureaucracy and the no-strike provision imposed upon government employees.

The Civil Service Division commenced operations in November of 1947. The staff

consisted of fifteen specialists, five interpreters, and approximately fifteen clerical employees. The Division met many heart-breaking difficulties and spent countless hours in meetings with Diet members, responsible government officials, employee groups, educators and just plain government employees before it appeared that there was any glimmering of a possibility that adequate and proper amendments to the civil service law might be passed by the Diet. At one point it was necessary to raise before General MacArthur the entire issue relative to collective bargaining, collective agreements and the right of employees to strike within the national government service. The revised National Public Service Law incorporating almost all of the Division's recommendations was finally passed in December, 1948.

In programming the total operation it was necessary to set up slightly more than one hundred work projects. These projects included everything from organizing the bureaus and sections of the Japanese Civil Service Commission and training its staff to such final aspects of the operation as health, welfare, and safety programs. A schedule was also assigned to each of the projects with a starting date as well as a tentative completion date, and projects were set upon a priority basis.

Creation of the National Personnel Authority

THE OFFICIAL title of the Japanese Civil Service Commission is the National Personnel Authority, or NPA, as we came to designate it. Through advice of SCAP, three outstanding and respected men were appointed as Commissioners. One was an industrial efficiency engineer as well as an educator, the second a mechanical engineer, while the third was not only an educator but also an astute behind-the-scenes politician. These men are still serving today and doing a most creditable job. The work of the nine bureaus, a personnel council, and eight regional offices which comprise the Commission, is under the administrative direction of a Director General.

Staffing NPA

AS STATED before, there were absolutely no individuals in Japan, regardless of their education, service, or training, who had any concept of a modern democratic civil service system as it is understood in other democracies of the world. Recruitment of the Commission staff was accomplished by two means. A small group of older employees were hand-picked and transferred from other ministries or organizations to give a working nucleus. This group was subsequently required to take all phases of training and earn their positions through open competitive examinations. The large majority of the staff, however, was recruited through two nation-wide examinations, consisting of an intelligence test and an oral interview.

As a result of the first examination, three successive groups of about two hundred and fifty appointees each were brought to Tokyo and placed in an intensive eight weeks training school covering every phase of personnel administration. As quickly as one group finished its training, the next group was established. Training materials for these first courses were necessarily prepared by members of our staff and presented in lecture form through Japanese translators. However, by the end of the third institute the counterpart Japanese staff assumed the duties of conducting succeeding training schools.

From the scores of tests administered following the completion of each phase of the training program and personal preferences, each appointee was ultimately assigned to one of the bureaus or regional offices. Here he received advanced training in his assigned activity. Usually the appointees worked during the morning while the afternoon was given over to training. And today, after two years of development and training, with the staff of NPA presently consisting of more than 1500 employees, it is the sense of the American Civil Service Division that while much room for improvement remains, this newly created staff has made really remarkable progress.

Recruitment and Examinations

PROBABLY the biggest headache in examinations was that of language. We learned early that after carefully and precisely preparing a test item when it was translated into Japanese and back into English again, a number of things happened. For instance, the Japanese have no comparable words for many of ours. Thus, the word "administrator," used in a test item prepared by our staff, came back translated as "office clerk." We also learned that items which would be considered excellent test material in this country were all too frequently useless due to differences in customs, usage, understanding, and language. Thus, the more quickly a trained Japanese staff was available, the more happy everyone would be.

Advanced training in examinations consisted of making job analyses for examination purposes, preparing examination outlines, teaching the writing of test items, making item analyses, developing item files, and conducting oral interviews. The staff learned quickly and did an outstanding job, but most of them were in their early twenties and were inexperienced in their field from a practical point-of-view. Consequently, for the more than routine examinations it was necessary to ask for assistance from older specialized personnel in other ministries and from SCAP sections. The NPA examination branch set up an item file, and each staff member began to write items in his own field or specialty to develop a bank of test item material.

As required by law, all administrators in the government service from section chief up to and including vice-minister had to take open competitive examinations. To even be considered for retention in their positions they had to place as one of the three top eligibles. The fact that the group constituted the elite and bureaucratic administrative group gave promise of a battle royal. The purpose of administering these examinations was not only to weed out the incompetent and ultrabureaucratic but also to inject some new life blood from the outside into the government service.

It was necessary not only to establish criteria for designating which of the administrative positions were to be included for examination but also to determine the duties, responsibilities, and requirements for successful performance. It was determined that there were 2,650 such positions and for the convenience of the examination, they were placed in 60 kinds of occupations.

Within each occupational group, four levels of positions were established based on experience standards. In general, in order to qualify for a given level, a candidate must have had at least a year of successful experience at the next lower level in addition to a prescribed length of experience within the occupational field. For example, for the position of bureau chief, the candidate must have had at least seven years of experience in an appropriate occupational field and at least one year of administrative experience at the divisional chief level or three years at the section chief level.

Two types of written tests were used for most of the designated positions. One was a test to measure administrative knowledge and ability. The second was a technical test, designed to determine whether the candidate possessed the minimum technical knowledge required. The technical tests were rated on a pass-or-fail basis since the positions involved were primarily administrative rather than technical in nature. Thus, scores from the administrative management test were used to determine rankings of the eligibles for each level of each occupation.

Oral interviews were not held although personal investigations were a definite part of the examination. A personal preference sheet as to desirability of placement was also a part of the application and was to be used in certification. Eligible lists were established for each level of each broad occupational group and positions filled by selective certification on the basis of the previously mentioned standards.

A few general comments as to this examination are in order. The administrative management examination, which was held on Sunday, January 15, 1950, was given in 14 cities to 7,432 candidates. The

same applicants took the technical tests the following Sunday, and provisions were made to cover their applications for 12,206 options involving different occupations, levels, and positions due to their individual single or multiple fields of background or experience.

Because candidates were told that the tests would take three hours but that they might have additional time if desired, they took the statement literally, and the majority took from five to seven hours. Some even stayed through to midnight, or fifteen hours. The newspapers dubbed this the "Paradise examination." This came about due to the fact that this was the first big national examination where candidates were permitted to smoke during the exam; were served all the tea they wanted when they wanted it; had places provided where they could eat their lunches; and were permitted to go to rest rooms.

While most of the examinations held by NPA involved at least 15,000 applicants, and the examination for National Rural Policeman is expected to hit 125,000, all papers must be hand-scored due to the lack of mechanical equipment. Although answer sheets are utilized, it is still a costly and time-consuming method.

Examinations almost without exception have been held in school buildings. Nearly all of the windows in the schools were broken during the war and because glass is a scarce commodity they are just beginning to replace the window panes. None of these buildings is heated, either because there never were any facilities or because the heating plants, pipes, and radiators were taken out for conversion into guns and bullets. And though it does not get as cold in most of Japan as it does in many of our northern states, overcoats are standard equipment for writing examinations. Because electricity is severely rationed, there are no lights in any of the rooms. Thus, to us, the physical facilities leave much to be desired, but the Japanese, never knowing any better standards, are not too unhappy. Kids in Japan follow one of our old customs of carving their names or initials in the desk tops, only it seemed to us they carved deeper, which raised havoc in marking a single-answer sheet.

The Japanese had about one monitor for each fifty applicants. They started and stopped timed or speed tests by the ringing of a huge cow bell somewhere in the center of the building easily heard in all the examination rooms. Latecomers were all sent to one or two rooms set aside for the purpose. An excerpt from the instructions read by the monitors to the candidates shows the practicality of the problems involved: "During the hour of examination, you should obey examiners' instructions and should not speak, leave your desk, or give troubles to other examinees. No question shall be made as to test items. When you get need of going to rest room or other unavoidable business, put up your hand and tell an examiner all about it."

Oral interviews and physical examinations were held on the same day for all successful candidates, thus saving them additional travel time and expense. Although all of the examinations to date have been held on a nation-wide basis, in the future most will be held in one or more of the regional office cities on the basis of area need.

Classification

AT THE END of 1948 only a small NPA staff that had first been trained in position-classification were even reasonably conversant with the subject. Virtually no one in the ministries and agencies had so much as heard of position-classification. Moreover, the concepts of "position," "position or class title," "classes of positions," or distinct "occupations" such as typing, carpentry, engineering, etc., were not used in Japanese personnel management by supervisors and employees.

Determining what occupations or types of employment existed in the government was the first major step. The seemingly simple task of identifying occupations proved to be a difficult assignment for an inexperienced staff and was accomplished only after several fresh starts. Approximately 450 distinct occupations have now been identified and defined in the Handbook of Occupations in the Japanese Government.

The classification system which is emerging in Japan, in contrast to that in the

American government, is composed of fewer but broader occupations, fewer but wider classes, a simpler structure, and clearer terminology. No grouping of positions into services such as Professional, Clerical, Administrative and Fiscal, Sub-Professional or Craft, Protective and Custodial, is contemplated or necessary. Positions in the Japanese government are to be classified in two ways:

1. By the kind of work involved in the position, such as carpentry, typing or electrical engineering, and

2. By the difficulty of such work as indicated by the class title such as carpentry I, carpentry II or carpentry III, or supervisory journeyman, journeyman, or apprentice level respectively.

Compensation

DUE TO several factors, the number one headache of NPA will undoubtedly stem from the problem of compensation. With the economy of the country fairly well stabilized through the assistance of SCAP, the average monthly income of the government worker in August of last year was ¥6300, which translated into American dollars, equals about \$19.00 per month, giving you a general idea of the Japanese standard of living in contrast to that of ours. The income of the average urban worker was approximately ¥10,000. Moreover, statistics indicated that the living costs for this average worker were about ¥11,500 a month. Because SCAP felt that pay increases might cause a further spiral of inflation to develop, it was literally decreed that wages be frozen. Last October, for example, NPA, after conducting an exhaustive and scientific wage survey, recommended that the ¥6300 average be increased to ¥7800. In spite of the fact that the civil service legislation requires NPA to make recommendations each time there exists a 5 percent change in cost of living or basic national wage rates, the recommendation was frowned upon both by the Diet and SCAP. This resulted in reverberations due to a quirk of Japanese psychology. "Recommendation," the term used in the civil service law has the same connotation as that of "ordering" to a

Japanese, and for the recommendation to be turned down, caused NPA to lose face with all concerned.

Without question, the greatest value of NPA in the eyes of the average government worker is what it can do for him compensation-wise. Adequate wages, like pay for like work, correction of prevailing pay inequities, and success in getting an adequate pay plan through the Diet are some of the major obstacles to be overcome.

Progress relating to compensation has been made on four integrated fronts. First, several cost-of-living studies or consumer price surveys have been conducted to the point that they will become an established technique. Secondly, wage surveys covering comparable positions of government, both in private business and industry are constantly being carried on. The third point of progress was the determination of the actual status of compensation of all governmental personnel. This latter task was no minor accomplishment when it is realized that no over-all pay plan for all employees ever existed and when the hundreds of special allowances which prevailed had never been fully known. Lastly, the number of existing pay plans was reduced from a total of ten to four, with promise that this latter number could be still further reduced.

Although much progress in the last two years has been made in the compensation program for Japanese government employees, there obviously remains much to be accomplished. Of the remaining hundred or so special work allowances, it is hoped that most of these can be incorporated into base pay when the future pay bill is put into effect. Others are no more than classification allocation factors and should be eliminated and one salary schedule used for all employees.

Lasting Effects

IN CONCLUSION, I would like to say a word about the probable lasting effects of our efforts toward establishing a modern personnel system in the Japanese government. It is my personal opinion that the results will be in direct ratio to the length of time our staff remains in Japan. The Japanese,

being great imitators, are willingly accepting our technical advice, but there are many matters that conflict with Japanese customs and psychology. Resistance by the Japanese to some of our personnel concepts should not be any more surprising or unexpected, however, than if they had come over here and insisted that we in the United States accept their traditional methods. I am sure we would not capitulate too easily.

It is the sincere belief of the Civil Service Division of SCAP that in the two years of our operations we have achieved remarkable progress and success. Even the most optimistic members of our staff have not had too much reason for disappointment. The training stage for the Japanese staff is in its final stages and an experienced staff is emerging. With the fundamental basic principles of personnel administra-

tion generally accepted by the Japanese as their own today, we find them more and more depending on ideas that yesterday were American only. From this date on, real progress should be made.

There remain many obstacles to overcome. Certain segments of the old bureaucratic regime still retain influence and constantly attempt to block needed reforms. This is as true in health, finance, welfare, and any other field as it is in civil service. We know it exists and would be foolish not to count on it. We would be extremely naive to think that they will encompass and utilize *all* of our American practices and attitudes. It is our thinking, however, that with Japan enjoying continued stability, and with our continued assistance, the Japanese government in the very near future can claim that it is operating under a modern and progressive merit system.

Be Touched to Be Happy

FROM THE thousands of odd and beautiful people Ernie Pyle met and wrote about, he drew one conclusion. Happiness seemed to stay with those who were just a little touched. Of these touched people, the most ruggedly individualistic of all was Frank Murphy. Frank was seventy-six years old and he lived just behind the Memphis city dump right on the banks of the Mississippi. He was constantly painting the house he had made of pounded-out auto hoods. There was nothing too unusual about this except that he painted at night without regard to color. Each morning after a night of painting he would leap from his bed to see how his house looked today.

Frank was completely self-supporting. During the depression days he repaired the pans and kettles he found in the dump and peddled them to housewives. "If they're too poor to buy them, I just give them away." When he got enough money to last for a few days he would stop merchandising and return to the more important things of life: painting and inventing. He was working on his own perpetual motion machine, the secret of which he expected to receive some night in his sleep.

Ernie Pyle's last paragraph on him read like this: "I wonder if when I am seventy-six I will be able to build a house with my own hands, and paint pictures that look pretty to me, and have time pass pleasantly, and have to depend on no man in this world either for company or for the necessities of life? If I should find myself so blessed, I'll consider myself a hell of a long way from being crazy."—*Friendly Adventurer*.

Administrative Control of Sick Leave

RAYMOND KRAH

IN MOST public jurisdictions, employee salaries constitute from sixty-five to seventy-five per cent of total operating expenses. Consequently, employee salaries and such extra emoluments as annual leave, holidays, and sick leave are the principal focus of discussion from interested citizens and taxpayer groups. A few years ago the San Diego, California, City Civil Service Commission met with the Personnel Director to analyze the extra-salary benefits accorded to city employees to see whether or not amounts granted were overly generous and whether employees abused some of the privileges available to them.

It was quickly determined that vacation benefits were not excessive and that city legal holidays, given in accordance with the state charter, averaged only eleven per year. Sick leave usage, however, appeared to be an area worth investigation. San Diego grants fifteen calendar days per year and allows employees to accumulate a maximum of ninety days.

Palpably, sick leave per se contributes to good employee morale by preserving a continuity of salary in the event of illness. The Commission, therefore, started with the postulate that the vast majority of employees were not abusing their use of sick leave. Studies revealed, however, that there was a wide discrepancy between departments in the use and/or abuse of sick leave.

Need for Sick Leave Program

THE ASSIGNMENT of a visiting nurse or doctor was rejected for two main reasons: (1) the expense involved for professional services, and (2) the possibility that "policing" the use of sick leave might have an adverse effect on the morale of those who were really ill. The actual money costs for sick leave in San Diego reached a substantial

figure. For example, the average use of more than nine days per year per employee in 1946 resulted in an expenditure of \$261,000 (average salary per day \$10.00 x 2,900 employees x 9). Clearly, any successful method of controlling the use of sick leave with pay would return handsome dividends to the city. Each diminution of one day per employee in the average yearly use of sick leave would equal roughly \$29,000 savings in production time. Translated in terms of employees, this saving would approximate 12.6 units of personnel.

Although, from a comparison of the use of sick leave by other government jurisdictions and private firms, the San Diego figures did not appear excessive (B.L.S. studies indicate ten to eleven days for private industry), the Commission agreed that some control was necessary to protect and deal fairly with those employees who either used no sick leave or very little. One of the major philosophies that crystallized the control of the sick leave problem for the Commission revolved about a corollary of the "equal pay for equal work" axiom. The Commissioners felt that, if sick leave was not controlled, inevitably employees with excellent records would question the value of their efforts if management took little or no note of them. From a broad point of view, it seemed that the best solution would be achieved by giving department heads clear responsibility over sick leave. They would then be expected to provide the impetus for administering the program down through the organization to the first-line supervisors. Making supervisors responsible was rejected simply because there were too many of them for effective control.

Sick Leave Program Adopted

ACCORDINGLY, the stage was set. Steps were taken in July, 1947, to formulate a complete and detailed pre-employment physical examination program, designed to: (1)

• RAYMOND KRAH is Personnel Director of the City of San Diego, California.

induct only those applicants who would be able to meet reasonable health standards, and (2) reject those of obviously poor health and poor health histories, who would, if inducted, contribute to a high city sick leave incidence. Later, a department heads' meeting was called, and the following program was explained in detail:

1. A complete analysis of the city's sick leave usage problems, in terms of departmental comparison, by:

- (a) Average use of sick leave per employee per month.

- (b) Each department's percentage of total city employment, contrasted with the department's per cent of the city's total sick leave—by months, by six-month periods, and for the entire preceding year.

2. Analysis of various individual employee sick leave records.

- (a) Serious, lengthy single-illness cases, i.e., pneumonia and off-duty injuries such as automobile accidents.

- (b) Chronic sick leave users (sore eye, sore ear, sore nose, sore finger, sore knee), showing lack of pattern and raising doubts of malinger.

- (c) Chronic illness that raised the question of the employee's ability to perform on the job, even while present.

3. Discussion of the use of sick leave for death or illness in the employee's immediate family.

4. Attitude of department heads in recommending or not recommending payment for sick leave.

5. Discussion of costs in the use of paid sick leave.

Having outlined and explained the problem, the Personnel Director presented the idea for control of the use of sick leave with pay. The method, briefly, embraced:

1. Monthly analysis and publication of the use of sick leave by departments.

2. Analysis in terms of number of employees in the department, sick leave days and hours in the department, translated into days per month per employee, for comparison between departments.

3. Other analysis, such as percentage of sick leave usage, matched with per cent of employment.

4. A simple personnel record card to provide, among other facts, the day and date of absence, and the employee's specific reason for sick leave. This personnel card was recommended for use in departmental administrative offices because it would provide factual data for recommending denial of paid sick leave and for leave counseling.

Departments selected to use the program on a trial basis played a major part in recommending to the entire group that the procedure was workable and paid off in results. A manager's "administrative regulation" was prepared and distributed that emphasized the objectives, the measurement terminology, and the suggested methods for analyzing the problem with the departments. Department heads were advised of the cost of each day of sick leave per employee per year, city-wide, and an objective figure was set that had as its goal a twenty per cent reduction in sick leave for the ensuing fiscal year.

Results of Sick Leave Program

RESULTS were tabulated and published at the end of each month, accompanied by a managerial communication to departments with poor records. In some instances, department heads were asked to make a detailed and specific report of what they had done to better the department's records. Strange and unbelievable (to the department heads) facts were uncovered. A uniformed service blamed its high incidence of sick leave on its women employees. Analysis showed they averaged less sick leave than the men. Then things began to happen. "Constant offenders," divulged through analysis, were brought into the department head's office and confronted with their sick leave records. Some were habitually absent on Mondays and Fridays; others the day before and/or the day after holidays; still others had averred a succession of "sore heads, ears, noses, and eyes" over a long period. One employee actually had attended three grandmother's funerals on baseball days, and some had sick leave records corresponding to the dates of local fairs, horse-racing meets, etc.

A careful check was made by the Civil Service Department to prevent overzeal-

ousness on the part of supervisors to deny or hinder the bona fide use of sick leave, and employees were privileged to appeal to the Personnel Director at all times. Except in the case of one department, which achieved an excellent record by requiring a doctor's certificate for even a single day's absence, little in the way of abuse was found.

In extreme cases, supervisors brought in-

dividuals to the Personnel Office for a review of their sick leave records, and the Personnel Director counseled or warned the employees.

To date, after two and a half years of operation, we are sold on the idea. Paid sick leave has been reduced from over nine days to a little less than three days per employee per year. Estimated savings in production time are about \$180,000 annually.

Let's Become Safety-Conscious

ONE OF the most frequently cited attractions of public employment is "security." Apparently, however, the public service has more "security" to offer than "safety." According to the National Safety Council, a man working for a public employer stands from two to twenty times the chance of being injured on the job as does the man working in a steel plant, a modern textile mill, or an aircraft manufacturing plant.

Somewhat incredulously you may ask, why is this? It certainly is not because these industries are inherently less dangerous places to work; rather, the reverse is generally true. The answer lies in the fact that enlightened private employers have been "safety-conscious" for a long time and have conducted whole-hearted organized accident prevention campaigns. Unfortunately, this "safety-consciousness" has failed to catch on with the majority of public administrators, despite the obvious benefits to be derived. The National Safety Council pulls no punches in declaring that "there is no phase of public administration more ripe for progress than that of organized accident prevention for public employees."

Aside from the obvious humanitarian interests at stake, let us outline some of the benefits public administrators can expect from an organized safety program:

1. Substantial savings in employee compensation and medical costs. In private industry a meat packer reduced accident losses from \$1.25 per \$100 of payroll to 11¢ per \$100. By spending \$5,000 a year on safety work, a public service company makes a direct saving estimated at \$19,000 a year. Among public employers, the Minnesota Department of Highways reduced its workmen's compensation expenditures from \$74,711 per year during the 30's to \$41,319 in 1948, with operations fully as great.

2. Improved employee morale and increased working efficiency. This is a benefit of especial interest to public personnel administrators. An employer who is apparently heedless of his employees' health and safety can hardly expect whole-hearted enthusiasm or cooperation from his employees. Not only will improved morale increase efficiency, but, as the National Safety Council points out, "the training and supervision which makes a man do a job more safely also makes him do it better."

3. Good public relations through removal of dangerous conditions and practices. The public suffers from carelessness in governmental operations, whether through increased taxes or directly when, for example, traffic hazards result in accidents. Furthermore, the public may well feel righteous anger if employees are injured or killed in accidents which could have been prevented.

—*New York Municipal Service Bulletin.*

Rethinking the Personnel Mission . E. S. WENGERT

OVER the years, we have entrusted to our civil service commissions throughout the nation the major burden of creating a qualified body of public servants. In most cases, they and their staffs started the job by fighting the spoilsmen who regarded party loyalty as a sufficient test of competence for public position. The struggle took many forms and still goes on in not a few places. But resisting the threat of spoils did not—and could not—of itself produce a competent public service. It is not enough to keep the rascals out. It is even more necessary to get the competent into the public service and keep them in. This, too, continues to be one of the major assignments of commissions.

To examine the details of this familiar story here would only be to repeat what has been well said in many other places. However, some of the ideas behind the primary principles and practices of our civil service systems have not always been made explicit. Indeed, they often remain so obscure that a critical analysis of the job of commissions and public personnel staffs cannot well be made. It is with some of these ideas then that this trial job analysis begins.

Technological Influence on Civil Service Practices

WE BUILT our civil service systems and our public personnel staffs in the period of the dramatic accomplishments of science and technology. The very practical appeal of success, especially in mass production industry, could not help but influence the basic ideas of the creators of public personnel administration. If we look for some characteristics of effective industrial opera-

tions we would find, to name just one item, that refined instruments of exact measurement support a complex organization of central controls. These controls no doubt place stringent limitations on the freedom of industrial managers. They can no longer rely on hunch or habit to set the course for a production process. But the controls rest on the objective demonstration of mathematics and engineering facts. Thus, the loss of freedom turns out to be simply the loss of opportunity to make avoidable mistakes.

All the profound meanings of the development of science and technology clearly cannot be fully set out in a paragraph. They have put their mark on many aspects of modern life, including the familiar patterns of public personnel administration. The scientific, objective, and mathematical demonstration that a candidate for public service is qualified controls the choice of officials just like the engineering formula controls production. Scientific classification of jobs and fixed salary schedules protect the public service from having salaries set by the personal whims of supervisors. They resemble quality standard controls in industry. Standard efficiency ratings reduce the risks of caprice by substituting for subjective evaluation a single universal index of the public servant's performance, comparable to the measurement methods that create interchangeable parts. These and the other well-known devices of our civil service systems certainly limit the freedom of the directors and the managers of our public enterprises. But do they not also simply deprive them of the opportunity to make mistakes that would be costly for the public welfare?

Like industrial managers, legislators and executives in government need the help of experts in their work. To organize these experts into a central controlling staff constitutes in government, as in industry, a logical step to prevent errors of judgment. In no small part, our public

• E. S. WENGERT is head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Oregon and a member of the Advisory Committee on Reorganization of the Departments of State Government in Oregon. His public service career includes work with the Office of Price Administration as Director of Training, Consultant to the Atomic Energy Commission, and Management Consultant to the Foreign Economic Administration.

personnel staffs reflect the logic of these facts. On them has been erected a complicated hierarchy of personnel controls. Line officials make decisions subject to a series of approvals by the personnel staffs. Legislators look to civil service commissions for guidance in establishing the legal framework of personnel policies.

That a scientific and objective answer of civil service commissions and personnel staffs turneth away the wrath of the self-seeking spoilsman and the arbitrary administrator hardly seems open to question. We can point to the successful identification of civil service systems with merit. And clearly, to support government by merit is to prefer virtue to vice. The appeal of merit, resting on scientific objectivity, has persuaded many people, in an increasing number of jurisdictions, to replace government by spoils with government under civil service commissions. It is this practical test of acceptance that seems to many to confirm the role that our public personnel staffs have undertaken to play in modern government.

How Scientific Are Civil Service Practices?

BUT THIS job analysis is put forward in a more skeptical mood. First of all, can the pretensions of scientific objectivity on which the usual personnel staff job rests stand examination? Certainly civil service commissions act as if the controls they operate have every warrant of objectivity and certainty: Even a casual scrutiny of civil service laws and rules makes plain that their moral authority derives directly from objective methods of science in technology. But is this foundation really firm?

Has the science of testing, for example, advanced to the point where a personnel staff man can assert that his predictions of success on the job support a rule of three, of five, or, as in some jurisdictions, a rule of one? And if there is any doubt about this question's answer, what is the rationale of the elaborate procedural framework for the involved business of rating, certification, and maintaining registers? That the most discriminating judgments possible need to be made among competitors for a public job is unquestionably true. But to assume that they can be made with our

present instruments to the fineness of, let us say, two decimal points strains even the believer's credulity. Yet unless they are so made, the rule of three loses its scientific and objective support as a way to prevent appointing officials from making mistakes. It becomes, in fact, simply a source of error.

Numerical ratings and the accompanying rule of three are almost universally regarded as bulwarks of the merit system. An enormous amount of the energy of personnel staff people goes into operating and perfecting these devices to reduce or even eliminate discretion of appointing officials. At the same time, they are used to give the disappointed job seeker apparently objective evidence that he failed to get the job because he did not rank high enough under a uniform and scientific rating procedure. Both personnel staff and appointing officer may thus transfer the onus of disagreeable decision from themselves to an impersonal and unimpeachable mathematical symbol.

But despite the imposing facade of numerical ratings, the decision is often far from objective. The United States Civil Service Commission, for example, describes the schedule for rating education and experience as "merely the medium through which are expressed in numerical form the various judgments reached during the process of evaluating an applicant's qualifications." And the Commission instructs its examiners "to determine that the rating procedure ranks them (the candidates) *properly* (italics supplied)." On such a foundation has often been built the judgment that a 70.00% candidate is qualified for a job, while a 69.99% candidate is not.

Civil service commissions, especially in the larger jurisdictions, usually cannot examine for a specific job. As a rule, recruitment and examining efforts aim to qualify persons for a class of positions. Elements common to a group of more or less similar jobs serve as the base for examinations. Some of these elements, such as a specific skill, may readily be identified. Others equally important cannot by their very nature be included, for they are not part of jobs in general, but grow only out

of one particular work situation. The non-typical and more subtle requirements of the specific job do not, and cannot, constitute part of the civil service examination. But the rule of three can make sense only as the logical inference from the assumption that a civil service examination tests qualifications for a particular job.

Along with the numerical rating and rule of the three, the usual civil service structure also includes job classification. For an endless variety of jobs and an endless variety of unrelated salaries, systems of classification provide a more or less inclusive plan for grouping and arranging activities of public servants and relating salaries in an orderly way to the groups of jobs established. Equal pay for equal work represents the ideal of a job classification system. But order under any such system, whatever its details, is achieved only at a price. Inevitably, in the search for similarities the personnel officer must discount differences. Identical positions obviously exist in imagination, not in fact. The attractive fact of interchangeable parts of the mass produced automobile has only an ideal equivalent in the "positions" with which classification analysts deal. Each person gives to his position in a service significant qualities that distinguish it in fact from every other position. Try as we may to obscure this fact by calling these persons "incumbents," the fact persists.

These observations are, of course, commonplace and would not need repeating here except for one important factor. Classifications are intellectual constructs, useful for many purposes. But in most civil service systems these constructs are taken as objective descriptions of reality. The particular classification label a job bears serves to identify the person who holds it; and when it comes to an efficiency rating, for example, his classification presumably makes it possible to compare him with anyone else with the same label. Or, when he is to be promoted, dismissed or displaced, he is subject to standards and rules and procedures attached to his job label; he is made interchangeable with others with the same label. What begins as an admittedly imperfect but useful device to deal with large groups of people becomes

the justification, supposedly scientific and objective, for disposing of troublesome problems when human and individual differences remain more relevant than superficial similarities.

These brief comments do no more than illustrate some of the dilemmas in which the personnel staff may find itself through building its work on concepts as if they represented accurate descriptions of the facts of administrative life. Knowingly or unknowingly, personnel staff people frequently use unverified assumptions to support and gain acceptance, in the name of scientific objectivity, for practices about which we need to be profoundly skeptical. It is from these practices that we might derive some further detailed materials for a complete trial job analysis. Within the limits of this discussion, however, we can only allude to some of them in the light of their operating consequences and point to some of the unresolved problems confronting virtually every civil service commission and personnel staff in this country.

Relations with Operating Officials

ORGANIZED as they are to control the management of the public services, personnel staff people often find themselves working in a setting of conflict and hostility. Tremendous ingenuity, time, and effort go into creating controls skillfully devised to make up for the shortcomings of line officials. The outside observer cannot help but be impressed with the efforts personnel staffs have made to keep line officials from making mistakes. The inside observer, however, may quickly sense that all is not as perfectly controlled as it seems. He may even discover that somehow, without fully understanding the whole truth, line officials have come to doubt the objective and scientific validity of typical civil service controls. They may have come to question whether personnel staff people truly possess greater knowledge of the personnel problems on whose solution their program depends. They may have come to the point where they devote increasing ingenuity, time, and effort to the evasion of controls that seem to them unrelated to the purposes of their programs. The observer may then note that every evasion breeds new

controls that in turn give birth to further evasions.

In this atmosphere of contest, the job of the personnel staff begins to acquire some distinctive characteristics. They may get their major satisfactions out of the mastery of the details and intricacies of complicated rules and procedures. Victory in the struggle to maintain controls may depend on the most apt manipulation of the regulatory tools of the personnel system. Even within the profession, personnel staff people reflect some of the consequences of their battles with line officials. The contest often leaves them defensively possessive about the controls they operate. Questions about how well these controls serve the ends of government or whether they serve any ends beyond the personnel system itself may leave personnel people cold. The hours of energy that go into the building of procedural routines to control incompetent line officials make it easy for the personnel man to conclude that no superior alternative can be conceived. Under these circumstances mutual professional self-criticism often gives way to mutual admiration.

Failure to look critically at the basic conceptions of their work has diverted the attention of many personnel staffs and civil service commissions from the task of testing their own performance against relevant standards. The measure of the effectiveness of a personnel office may, for example, become the number of pieces of paper "processed" in the course of a day or an hour. But even where the personnel staff has no significant burden of processing, measures of its performance usually do not often enough raise questions about the staff's contribution to government by merit. Instead, it is readily assumed that merely because a civil service examination is administered or because a classification survey is made government by merit is furthered.

Aggressive civil service commissions, operating their systems of control uncritically, often cut themselves off from effective influence over management practices and policies. Their staffs may find their advice and suggestions to line officials received with suspicion. Controls that do

not, for example, insure the selection of qualified people cannot help but prejudice the line official against advice from the creator of the controls. Where good personal relations have wiped out suspicion, the line official may still retain good-natured skepticism or even patronizing contempt for the personnel man's advice. For good personal relations often make the personnel man a partner to "deals" to avoid the most crippling consequences of the system. Under such conditions, he can hardly hope to become a valued and respected staff aide of the line official.

The chances for effective influence over line management dwindle as the personnel staff man experiences some of the frustrations that accompany uncritical control. Having fought hard to preserve the integrity of the system's rules and regulations, he may find that the line official whom he sought to control has resorted to devious methods to get around the rule. The line official may have caught on that job descriptions can be written to get the desired grade, that two can play at a game that lacks from the start honest relevance for the governmental job to be done. Line officials also learn that appeals can be taken and pressures applied to the superiors of the hapless staff officer who crosses him. The shock of such a discovery by the personnel man may lead him to seek a way out through more stringent rules. But without knowing it, he may thereby simply multiply his frustrations.

Almost universally civil service commissions and their staffs find little time to undertake what might be called the education of the line managers. Relying as they do on controls that may contribute little or nothing to government by merit, they frequently have no equipment for the task of education. It is often far easier to say "no" than to point out the consequences of a prohibited action and invent alternatives that solve a personnel problem. Sometimes unfortunately the simple "no" may be all the personnel staff can offer. The violation of an ill-conceived or irrelevant rule may not, in fact, have any dire consequences for good government. But even the best possible rule needs constant testing against new situations and

immediate modification in the light of its operation as an aid to government by merit. Meaningful education in management demands frequent reexamination by the personnel staff of the foundation ideas that support its systems of controls. Mere exhortations to cooperate carry little conviction for the line official who sees only infrequent connection between the key rules of the civil service system and the job he has to do.

Of course, line officials need staff help. In recent years we have added many new insights to our knowledge of the ways in which human beings act together in groups. We understand more fully the meaning of morale and some of its conditions. How some groups of people working together become purposeful and effective teams of co-workers no longer need be attributed to such almost mystical forces as leadership and cooperativeness. Group dynamics is a rapidly emerging area of scientific knowledge. The science of tests and measurements has not stood still. To organize and to make available this growing body of knowledge about people, to translate it into the numberless situations of government's everyday activities is a personnel staff job. But too few of our civil service commissions have developed the kind of expertness in these areas of knowledge required to become staff advisers. Too many of them have bounded their science by their own, often misconceived rules and procedures. As a consequence, the public service suffers seriously for want of the significant staff aid its line officials need.

Guidance versus Domination

UNDER our system of governments, especially national and state, personnel specialists and civil service commissions have had a significant share of the task of shaping public personnel policy thrust upon them. Very often the law enjoins the commission to make regular recommendations to the legislature. What is the nature of this part of the assignment of the personnel staff? How can they discharge this responsibility?

If commissions persuade legislators that a civil service system means control by the personnel staff of the people who work for

government, the job of administration and management appears to have been made quite simple and straightforward. Such titles as "director of personnel" or "director of civil service" suggest to legislators and also the general public that the principal personnel staff officer no doubt runs the show. To foster these impressions may give status to the civil service commission and the personnel staff. This conception of their work may also influence salary scales. To support what others think of them, the civil service commissions can offer the evidence of the system of controls they administer. And they create thereby the standard of performance by which public and legislature judge them.

But civil service commissions and personnel directors cannot in fact have the management of government in their hands. They may control and direct the system under which public servants are hired and fired. They may even have a hand in many phases of the hiring and firing. But control in any significant sense must reside where the work is done. It must be the prerogative of supervisors—not the personnel staff.

To have failed to dispel the misconception about the nature of their job has hindered civil service commissions in influencing legislatures and public. Commissions have not typically helped them gain fuller understanding of the actual location of public personnel problems today. Thus, legislators naturally come to expect more of civil service commissions than they can perform. This may have its ironically amusing side as when a congressman wants to know why the Civil Service Commission has not stopped tardiness or morning and afternoon coffee hours among federal employees. But it has its serious consequences when the promise of control, implicit in the systems of civil service administration, is not kept. Legislators may lose confidence in their civil service commission, and the influence the personnel staff has on policy wanes accordingly.

Some civil service commissions have, over the years, apparently written off the job of influencing legislation as a poor investment of staff time and energy. Or, if this is too extreme a conclusion, some of them at least have come to give the job

only a superficial concern. Perhaps they have concluded that they carry little weight with legislators on crucial matters. Perhaps they have little faith in the competence of the advice they might give and are content to allow uninformed lay judgments to prevail. Whatever the possible explanation, fundamental issues of personnel policy are getting decided by legislatures without benefit of the best knowledge and intelligence of our personnel staffs.

Within the last half dozen years, for example, the Congress has reaffirmed the principles of spoils politics with scarcely a protesting murmur from the U.S. Civil Service Commission. Under these principles, public office becomes the reward, not for competence to perform the tasks of the office, but for honorable discharge from the nation's armed forces. In some circumstances, even those who happen to be appropriately related to the member of the armed forces may also enjoy the reward of public office. To have allowed Congress, without forceful protest, to use public employment to meet the nation's obligation to the members of its armed forces marks the Civil Service Commission as having a curiously stunted view of its role as the personnel staff agency in the federal government.

We know, and knew in 1944, on the basis of substantial experience that veteran's preference does not help to compensate even the veteran who may find public employment through it. To introduce into a group of professionally competent public servants persons selected as veterans rather than as professional peers can destroy the group's work effectiveness. Not only may the morale of the group suffer but the favored veterans themselves fail to derive satisfactions from their work. Instead of beneficiaries, they become perhaps unknowing victims of the easy acquiescence of the Civil Service Commission in the program Congress established.

Not only is there no personal reward for the veteran through his preference; as a citizen he is also imposed upon and deceived by veteran's preference. Our experience before 1944 made it relatively easy to predict what is now self-evident fact. The scope of public services and controls to

deal with the problems of our society continue to grow. What is more, the stake of every citizen in the most competent performance of the work involved in these services and controls has grown. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that a growing number of public servants now make decisions whose consequences ramify so widely that mistakes on their part could well prove disastrous for thousands or even millions of us. For the Civil Service Commission to have ignored this intelligence in 1944 and to continue to accept a spoils principle as an integral part of the selection and retention of public servants confronts every citizen with a real, though obviously still unmeasured, hazard and risk. Instead of a benefit, veteran's preference threatens veterans with calamity.

For our trial job analysis this means that the public personnel staff carries a burden of enormous responsibility for the public welfare. Of course, no momentary protest in 1944 or at present could alter legislative commitments to veteran's preference. But imaginative anticipation of what likely issues and solutions will confront legislatures dealing with personnel policy becomes the constant challenge of the personnel staff. Building understanding of the nature of these issues and the consequences of one or another set of solutions takes time. It may be that the Civil Service Commission could only have met the new threat of spoils politics by actually inventing genuinely appropriate ways to reward veterans for their service. Certainly that part of the problem was and is real. But our civil service commissions and their staffs often act as though legislative misconceptions of personnel policy in any area, even when enacted into law, preclude the personnel staff from making its knowledge and intelligence available and effective. Such an approach must quickly destroy the integrity of the personnel staff and leave the determination of personnel policy for those who most need the aid of staff specialists.

Challenge for the Future

SPACE prevents exploring in further detail what even brief reflection suggests about the demanding nature of the job of

the civil service commissions and their staffs. To reexamine the fundamental assumptions of our civil service systems and to test their validity—that alone would call for unusual energy and skill. Add to this then the reconstruction of present systems, undoubtedly required to make them conform more nearly to the needs of government by merit, and we have another immense assignment. More difficult still is the emerging task of relating the growing scientific knowledge about people to the problems of human interrelationships and group action with which the line official deals as he seeks to carry out his programs. And deepening the understanding of legislators and public about the real nature of public personnel issues and their solutions requires our civil service commissions and their staffs to reappraise the idea that the public official has to be the slave of the whim and passion and ignorance of those whom he serves.

Can this manifold job be done? This essay has suggested some of the more apparent failures of the past and the continuing demands of the future. Certainly the requirement for experimentation is immediately upon us. For the federal government, for example, it may be doubted whether the fiction of the entire government as a single employer can continue to justify unified administration of the federal personnel system or a major part of it. This view gains support from the requirement that the personnel staff job contributes directly and immediately to the accomplishment of line activities. The personnel staff man needs to grasp how well or

how poorly the principles and practices of personnel administration serve the particular needs of particular kinds of governmental activity. He needs the concreteness of specific applications of personnel policy to demonstrate to legislators and public how laws work or need modification. The United States Civil Service Commission, purporting to concern itself with the whole of the federal government, can hardly avoid operating at a level of abstraction that defeats persuasive and intelligible communication with line officials and with Congress. To find the optimum limits of centralization calls for further experimentation with personnel systems for individual agencies or perhaps for groups of them. Our present federal framework of organization stands in the way of a test of the personnel staff job to be done.

Our civil service laws—federal, state, and local—have taken shape without rigorous analysis of the body of fact and fancy underlying their prescriptions of policy. Members of civil service commissions and their staffs are products of a society where the public service is not always highly valued. The traditional task of keeping rascals out of public office may be so demanding that even established public servants must regularly prove to the civil service commission and its staff that they are free of rascality. These are some of the obstacles to experimentation and earnest seeking out of the elements of the personnel staff job. Only through change—in laws, in organization of our personnel systems, in attitudes—can we expect to fulfill the requirements of the personnel staff job.

Tip for Typists

BY RAISING the average typewriter stand a few inches, experts in the Department of Agriculture's office of personnel training claim that the amount of energy consumed to make each stroke can be reduced from an average of 14 pounds to only 14 ounces. A typewriter at the proper level in proportion to a person's height results in easy finger movement rather than a full-arm stroke.

Most typewriters are on stands that bring them only 26 inches off the floor—a survival of the days when typewriters were on sewing-machine stands and a pedal moved the carriage. Bringing the typewriter a little closer to the user reduces mental fatigue and gives greater accuracy because the fingers hug the keyboard more easily. Speed champions do their best work at 30 inches.—*Management Review.*

Tests for Selecting Engineers

MILTON M. MANDELL
and SEYMOUR CHAD

RECRUITMENT and selection of engineers for the federal government is one of the major areas of work of the Examining Division of the United States Civil Service Commission. The large construction projects and the research and maintenance activities of the government require a substantial number of professional engineers. The President's Scientific Research Board estimated in 1947 that there were approximately 12,000 engineers in the federal government, of whom more than 4,000 were in the Department of the Army. About 2,400 were in the Department of the Navy, about 1,600 in the Department of Agriculture and in the Department of the Interior, approximately 1,200 in the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics. The remaining 2,000 or so were scattered through the other agencies. Unlike most city and state governments, which also have substantial numbers of engineers, a significant number of federal engineers are engaged in research activities.

Very little research work has been done on methods for the selection of professional personnel in the United States. This lack of research work has led to stereotypes in regard to selection methods which are very well illustrated by a quotation in *Life* magazine based on a statement made by a college senior in engineering who was asked about job prospects. He said:

We're shooting to be tagged by — or — or some outfit like that before we graduate. That's why you've got to figure all your plays from the time you're a sophomore—the right courses with grades that are good but not too good (lower part of the top third is about best), plenty of campus activities to show leadership and ability to get along with people, and some athletics so that the personnel jokers from the big companies who look over the records will know that you're no swish. You've got to be well-balanced and well-rounded—that's

how you get the letter on the high-grade bond paper which says, "Report to the executive offices on the first of September, 1949." That's what almost all of us are after.

Testing Program Developed by the Commission

THE Civil Service Commission undertook in 1947 a study of selection methods for engineer positions.¹ Included in this research study were civil engineers from the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, and electrical, radio, and mechanical, electronic, and aeronautical engineers from the Wright Field Laboratories of the Air Force, the Naval Air Materiel Center, the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, and the National Bureau of Standards. The entrance salary for these positions at the present time for those who have received their Bachelor's degrees in engineering, or who have comparable experience, is \$3,100 a year. The journeyman grades for engineers usually range in salary between \$4,600 and \$6,000 a year.

A number of types of criterion measures were used for this study. One type was a job performance rating of the participants in the study made out by their superiors on a special rating form designed only for the purpose of the study. A second type of criterion was an equal division of the employees who were at the same salary grade into a high and low group based on age and length of service at that grade. The younger employees and the employees who had been in the grade a shorter period of time were considered the high group in terms of potential ability; the older employees and those who had been a longer time in that grade and had therefore been passed over for promotion were considered

¹ This study was carried on by the United States Civil Service Commission as part of its regular program for the improvement of selection methods. Part of the work that was done on this project was performed by persons employed by the American Council on Education in its contract with the Scientific Personnel Division of the Office of Naval Research. Neither organization assumes any responsibility for the contents of this report.

• MILTON M. MANDELL is in charge of research and development in administrative and management testing, U.S. Civil Service Commission.

• SEYMOUR CHAD is assistant to Mr. Mandell in the work of development and preparation of examinations in the physical science and engineering fields.

in the lower group. Biserial correlations were computed, based upon this dichotomy. It is clear, of course, that the criterion applies only to groups. So far as any one person is concerned, there obviously may be factors in his career which can account for his reaching a particular grade at a late stage without any indication of lack of superior ability. To the extent that this is so, the differences found between the high group and the low group in the study probably would be an underestimate of the true differential ability of the selection methods being studied.

The following is a description of the tests for which the best results were obtained and some of the data computed for these tests.

Gottschaldt Figures Test

THE VERSION of the Gottschaldt test used for this study is the one prepared by Professor Thurstone of the University of Chicago. The test was administered with a time limit of ten minutes. The instructions to the candidate state that he is to determine which of the figures A, B, C, or D contains the figure to the left in the same shape, position, and size. More than one of the figures may contain the figure to the left, but at least one of the figures does contain the original figure. (See Figure I, page 220, for a sample item from this test.)

The biserial correlations for the Naval Electronics Laboratory with thirty-six cases, the Naval Air Materiel Center with thirty-eight cases, and the Vicksburg Corps of Engineers District Office with fifty-five cases were $+0.59$, $+0.47$, and $+0.57$, respectively, using as the criterion the division of the groups based on age and length of service in the same grade. These correlations, while based on relatively small numbers of cases, seem to be highly consistent and their significance is enhanced because they are based on four different types of engineers working in these three laboratories. At the Naval Electronics Laboratory the engineers were in the electronics field; at the Naval Air Materiel Center they were engaged in aeronautical and mechanical engineering; at Vicksburg

they were performing several types of civil engineering work.

For twenty-eight electrical engineers at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, the product-moment correlation between the scores on this test and job performance was $+0.44$. For fifty-six mechanical and ordnance engineers at the same laboratory, the product-moment correlation with job performance was $+0.33$. The results with job performance ratings for this test, however, were not so consistent as the correlations based on age and length of service at grade. Since the latter type of criterion is much more objective, this difference in results can be expected.

Formulation Test

THIS TEST involves the ability to translate a narrative statement into a formula which is the equivalent of the narrative statement. It is used in a number of universities to predict performance in engineering courses. A sample item is shown in Figure II, page 220.

Using age and length of service at grade as the criterion, the biserial correlations for this test for nineteen cases at the Naval Electronics Laboratory, thirty-eight cases at the Naval Air Materiel Center, and fifty-five cases at the Vicksburg Corps of Engineers District were $+0.64$, $+0.20$, and $+0.41$, respectively. This represents much greater fluctuation than was found with the Gottschaldt test. There are a number of reasonable explanations. One is that the abilities measured by the test are not uniformly needed in engineering work. They could be most important in the electronics field and least important for aeronautical and mechanical engineers. Since the samples of aeronautical and mechanical engineers were engaged in both research and production activities, one might also find that this test is more important for research than for nonresearch activities. However, the data were not computed to test the validity of this hypothesis. Our experiments to check these results and explore other ramifications of the problem will continue. Other studies by the United States Civil Service Commission of engineers, physicists, and chemists indicate

that this test differentiates most consistently between research and nonresearch workers in these fields, as compared with the other tests included in these experiments. For example, for thirty-two research engineers at the Naval Electronics Laboratory compared with fifty-five engineers not engaged in research work at the same laboratory, differences significant at the one per cent level of confidence, in favor of the research engineers, were obtained. The average score of the research engineers was approximately five points higher than the average score of the nonresearch engineers.

Product-moment correlations for this test with job performance were obtained. Among the significant correlations obtained were those of $+0.41$ for 38 mechanical engineers at Wright Field, $+0.59$ for 26 electrical engineers at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, and $+0.46$ for 20 cases at the Naval Electronics Laboratory. Relatively more consistent data, using job performance as the criterion, were obtained for this test as compared with the Gottschaldt Figures Test, although in a number of cases the results were not significant.

Abstract Reasoning Test

THIS TEST involves the ability of the candidate to determine a principle which ties together several abstract symbols. It is similar to the English Matrix Test. An example is shown in Figure III, page 220.

This particular test in the experimental study required thirty minutes of testing time. The biserial correlations, with age and length of service in grade as the criterion, for thirty-six engineers at the Naval Electronics Laboratory, thirty-eight at the Naval Air Materiel Center, and thirty-one at Vicksburg, were $+0.52$, $+0.54$, and $+0.31$, respectively. It is interesting to note that the lowest correlation is for civil engineers who are engaged in practical construction work for the Corps of Engineers.

The abstract reasoning test generally produced relatively low product-moment correlations when job performance was used as the criterion, although an r of $+0.51$ was obtained with thirty electrical engineers at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory,

and an r of $+0.47$ was obtained with twenty-one mechanical and ordnance engineers at the same laboratory. A comparable figure for forty-one radio engineers at Wright Field was $+0.34$.

Using the same weights for each test for each laboratory, the multiple correlations for these three tests for the Naval Electronics Laboratory, the Naval Air Materiel Center, and Vicksburg were $+0.72$, $+0.59$, and $+0.56$, respectively. In the field of psychometrics, these data would generally be considered consistent and significant, considering that they were subjected to the rigorous test of applying the same weights to four different types of engineers at three different laboratories.

Physics Test

THE LARGE volume of testing by the United States Civil Service Commission makes it difficult to use specialized subject-matter tests. For example, the Commission's 1950 examination for Junior Engineers included more than ten different options. For this reason, an attempt is made in the research work of the Commission to emphasize tests that have a broad usefulness. Since the subject-matter field of physics underlies all of the special engineering options, a basic test in the field of physics was included in this experimentation.

The data obtained for the test were encouraging enough to result in its inclusion in the 1950 Junior Engineer examination. For example, with job performance as a criterion, product-moment correlations of $+0.50$ for thirty-one radio engineers at Wright Field and $+0.42$ for twenty electronics engineers at the Naval Electronics Laboratory were obtained for this test. For approximately one hundred thirteen aeronautical and mechanical engineers at the Naval Air Materiel Center, using job performance as the criterion, 34 per cent of those rated high in ability received high test scores while only 8 per cent of those rated low in ability were in the same range of scores. This difference was significant at the one per cent level of confidence. For the Vicksburg group of fifty-five civil engineers, using age and length of service in grade as the criterion, a biserial correlation

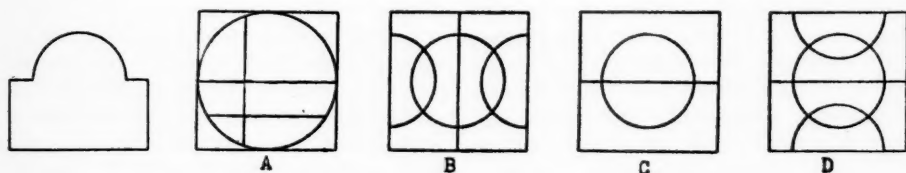


FIGURE I. Sample item from Gottschaldt Figures Test.

The length l of a spiral spring supporting a pan is increased c centimeters for x grams of weight placed on the pan. What is the length of the spring if w grams are placed on the pan?

A) $lc + \frac{x}{w}$ B) $l + \frac{w}{cx}$ C) $l + \frac{cw}{x}$ D) $\frac{l + cw}{x}$ E) $\frac{l + cx}{w}$

FIGURE II. Sample item from Formulation Test.

Each of the first four questions has two boxes at the left. The first box has three symbols, and the second box has two symbols with one missing symbol represented by a question mark. There is always some difference between the symbols in the first box and the symbols in the second box. You are to decide what the difference between the symbols in the first box and the symbols in the second box is, and choose the symbol lettered A, B, C, D, or E, which can best take the place of the missing symbol in the second box.

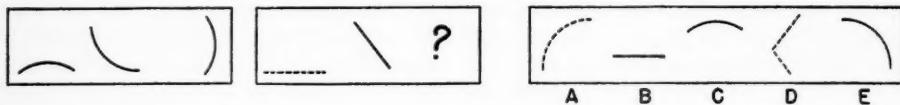


FIGURE III. Sample item from Abstract Reasoning Test.

of $+0.53$ was obtained for the physics test. Using the same criterion at the Naval Electronics Laboratory and the Naval Air Materiel Center, substantially lower biserial correlations, $+0.27$ and $+0.23$, were obtained.

Table Reading Test

THIS SPEED test takes approximately ten minutes to administer and seems to measure visual acuity and carefulness. The test was developed by the Air Force and is described in the volume by J. P. Guilford on classification tests, which was prepared as one of the monographs on the Air Force testing program. Basically, the task in this test is similar to finding a number in a table of logarithms or in a statistical table.

Inspection of the data obtained with this test indicated that a high penalty should be placed on errors. For example, for one group, none of those in the high group of ability, but 17 per cent of the low group, made three or more errors on this test. This difference is significant at the five per cent level of confidence.

For fifty-six electrical and mechanical engineers at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, divided into two groups based upon their participation in research or non-research work, a critical ratio significant at the five per cent level of confidence was obtained. For fifty-five civil engineers at Vicksburg, using age and length of service as the criterion, the biserial correlation for this test was $+0.48$. For more than one hundred civil engineers at the Bureau of Reclamation, a contingency coefficient of $+0.33$ was obtained for this test with job performance as the criterion.

Relation of Job Success and Personal Background

INTERESTING information was obtained in regard to the relationship between job success and background items for these engineers. These items have not been tested for their statistical significance but are presented for the purpose of indicating trends.

1. There seems to be some correlation between completion of one year of graduate work and job success. Of twenty-one engineers at the Bureau of Reclamation who had one year of graduate work, sixteen were in the upper half on job-performance ratings. Of eighty-nine

electrical, mechanical, and electronics engineers who had completed one year of graduate work, fifty-five were in the upper half on job performance.

2. The age at which these engineers decided to pursue the engineering profession does not seem to be related to job success. For example, of the ninety-three engineers who said they had decided on engineering work before the age of sixteen, forty-eight were in the upper half on job performance and forty-five were in the lower half. For those deciding on an engineering career between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, between the ages of eighteen and twenty, and between the ages of twenty, and twenty-two, there were no differences in job success. However, of the fifty-three engineers included in the study who said that they had decided on an engineering career after the age of 22, only one-third were in the upper half on job performance while two-thirds were in the lower half.

3. There seems to be a negative relationship between doing best in high school in the social sciences and performance as an engineer. This relationship does not hold true with those who did best in English. Only six of the twenty engineers who did best in high school in the social sciences were in the upper half on job performance and fourteen were in the lower half, whereas of the twenty-eight engineers who did best in English, thirteen were in the upper half and fifteen in the lower half. This relationship between job success and social sciences also holds true for college work, as does the lack of correlation between job success and standing in English classes.

4. Evidently, for the types of engineers included in this study, "reading books" rather than "doing things" seems to have a negative correlation with job success. The engineers were asked which of five leisure-time activities they had engaged in while in high school. One hundred and three of the engineers took the choice "Read books to learn about scientists and scientific experiments," but only forty-three of these engineers were in the upper half on job performance.

5. Standing in the lower half of the college graduating class seems to be negatively related to job success. Fifty-five of the engineers included in the sample had graduated in the third or fourth quarter of their class, but only twenty of them were in the upper half on job performance.

6. Graduation from high school at the age of sixteen seems to be negatively correlated with future job success as an engineer. Of the seventy-five engineers included in this study

who graduated at this age, only thirty-two were in the upper half on job performance.

7. Holding an office in college groups does not seem to be related to future success as an engineer. The difference in job-performance ratings for those holding offices and those not holding offices was not significant.

8. Achieving recognition for scholastic accomplishments does seem to be related to future job success. Of forty-nine engineers who graduated with honors or high honors, thirty-five were in the upper half on job performance. Of one hundred engineers who were members of scientific honorary fraternities, approximately seventy were in the upper half.

Because the above data include both research and nonresearch engineers, the results of this study should be applied with caution. It is reasonable to assume that some data would be substantially different if research engineers were segregated from those in nonresearch activities.

Conclusion

THE DATA presented above for a number of these tests indicate that rather high degrees

of success can be achieved in testing junior engineers. The relatively small amount of research that has thus far been done in the United States on this problem justifies continued experimentation in order to determine the best combination of selection methods for positions in the engineering profession. The United States Civil Service Commission is arranging for a follow-up study on persons appointed from this year's examination for engineers in order to obtain additional data on the relationship between the tests used and job performance in various types of engineering work. It is probable that a sample of several hundred engineers will be available for this follow-up study, which will be based on the job performance of these persons during their first year of employment. The Commission hopes to complete this study some time next year. It may also be possible to arrange for later studies based on a greater length of service.

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PERSONNEL OPINIONS

• What is the thinking of experienced personnel people on everyday problems of personnel policy and practice? Their views can often provide readers of *Public Personnel Review* with cues to sound, constructive policy-making.

The editors have posed the same question to each of several persons and have asked them to comment on the various points it raises. Here's what they say.

The Question

How can a public personnel office make a case for maintaining or expanding its program in terms of specific dollars and cents values?

The Replies

JOSEPH A. CONNOR, Regional Director, Seventh United States Civil Service Region.

As a prelude to discussing ways and means of presenting a budget request for a merit system, consideration of some provocative generalizations might well be profitable.

The descriptive term, "operating a merit system" has, seemingly, been subordinated to the more exalted term, "personnel administration." However, the professional is hard pressed to give a concrete explanation of just what that means. Query persons engaged in personnel work and witness their abashment and groping, which usually ends by responding with platitudes.

Acceptance of a product, plan, or program depends entirely upon its presentation. Too many in personnel work apparently believe that anyone should understand what is meant by "techniques of personnel administration." Although a stock phrase in the profession, it explains nothing. Regardless of how good a product is, it does not sell itself.

Admittedly, comparisons are not conclusive, but consider another arm of management—cost accounting—which, like personnel administration, is designed to assist management, supervisors, and workers. Cost accounting, like personnel administration, is an overhead expense and understood by all. Few businessmen would risk being without it. Unfortunately, the same cannot always be said with respect to personnel administration. The relatively small appropriation granted for merit system opera-

tion is tangible evidence that the personnel profession has not sold its "package."

Many other such comparisons can be made. All will influence the thought that merit system operation—what it is—what it does—what its benefits are—is not well understood.

With merit systems it behooves personnel administrators to do a year-around job of selling to those whose support is desirable and to those who hold purse strings. Contacting legislators might appear at first blush as pernicious lobbying and, if handled in a perfunctory manner, would result in that criticism; but, if properly handled, it is carrying out the highest duty of a public servant—that of keeping the public informed of its activities through its chosen representatives. Such a program should not be formal.

A budget request usually conforms to a prescribed format and should be stated in plain, simple language. Consider, however, that the mind retains best what it hears and sees. It follows, then, that the personnel administrator appearing before a funding group should be one who is capable, whose mind is agile, whose manner and mental stature commands respect, and who can command enthusiasm. He should be equipped with visual aids, such as pictorial, graphic, and chart illustrations which are "to the point" and provide mental images of the import of his request for each phase of operation.

The program presented must be designed to serve the needs of each local situation dependent upon the size of the community or responsibilities involved. Too expansive a program can be as detrimental as none at all, since it would result in excessive costs to the community and sour the legislative group on the entire program.

Presentation should be on a factual basis. The cost system employed will be dependent upon local conditions. The work to be performed should be based upon the program that is planned for the budget year. Justification of unit costs should be based upon the unit costs of the preceding year and any variance therefrom substantiated.

Once the budget has been approved, the Personnel Director cannot relax his efforts; he must continue to keep the legislative group informed. It is imperative that he make certain the program as approved is carried out to the fullest extent possible. This will require frequent periodic analyses of costs and program

progress in order to insure the most economical use of funds, as well as determining whether or not each phase of the program is being properly carried out.

JOHN C. CROWLEY, League of California Cities, Los Angeles.

"Making a case" means justification before some superior. Such a case as this should form a part of a personnel officer's supporting evidence when submitting his budget request for the next fiscal year.

Assuming a city executive as the recipient of the budget request, the personnel officer must be assured that the city executive will be intelligently receptive to a budget presentation that relates dollars to program as well as dollars to results. The personnel officer, of course, must satisfy himself that he is well acquainted with the means of developing such a presentation.

Some programs of a public personnel agency produce directly measurable results. A safety program can reduce workmen's compensation premiums and other insurance costs. Accident causes should be analyzed and related to safety education, including driver-safety training. Time devoted to study and action on possible abuses of sick-leave privileges can show up in dollars saved through a reduced average sick-leave rate. Higher measurable productivity of operating departments may directly reflect a training program.

Much of the activity of a personnel department, unfortunately for the personnel director at budget time, does not easily translate itself into dollar values. A personnel office work program does not constitute its own justification. The fact that processing *X* number of job applicants will cost *Y* dollars accounts for a budget figure, but it does not prove that the city is getting the best applicants. It is also wise to develop costs for such other units as examinations, classification work audits, and the like, to make a meaningful budget total; but they still don't prove measurable values.

Assume, however, that you have cost figures for several years. If they are related, in turn, to the measurable, ultimate reflections of personnel policy and practice, justification of the existing or expanded program becomes more feasible. Specifically, the rate of employee turnover, analyzed by class and by department, will eventually reflect personnel practices in a discernible way—war, depression, and other factors notwithstanding. Turnover costs, even by individual classes, can be estimated fairly accurately in dollars and cents.

Reliance on turnover figures demands care-

ful interpretation. For example, you cannot associate a change in testing practices with lower turnover unless it is the only important variable. It may be that improvement in maintenance of the classification or pay plan has affected the rate of employee separation. Or, economic conditions involving some part of the working force may have influenced the total turnover rate unduly.

It would seem to follow that if turnover is high, dollar costs of that turnover rate may justify financing better preventive measures and bringing weak elements of personnel practice up to par, so that low morale symptoms may be diminished. When turnover rates are lowered, dollar justification may reasonably progress to experimenting with refinements. Keeping other program elements constant, you may seek to sell, say, a more refined testing scheme on the expectation of reducing turnover by hiring of more carefully selected recruits. The refinement should prove or disprove its worth, with intelligent analysis, within a year or two.

To show figures on results is to justify an existing program or to reveal the necessity of improvement. To show results obtained elsewhere with a program you wish to initiate is to challenge both your city executive and yourself.

RICHARD W. GANONG, Chief, Field Branch, State Merit System Services.

The central personnel agency must be able to establish the fact that superior selection, good employee morale, and successful employee relations more than pay for themselves over a period of time and that substantial expenditures to produce these results, accordingly, are a sound investment. Public understanding of these facts should come with continuing effective public relations; budget officials want specific figures which can be presented in terms of good investment.

Fundamentally, what we are considering is the public personnel office budget, its financial plan of operation. "Making a case" for the personnel program implies marshalling of facts and arguments as justification. Since the budget is a financial plan, its justification will be most effective if presented in financial terms, that is to say, in terms of costs and estimated costs. Prerequisite to this method of budgetary justification are unit cost figures and adequate cost analysis procedures related generally to the broad functions of the public personnel program and specifically to those work elements which comprise the broad activities. Given this framework and the availability of

unit production data and cost figures, numerous lines of attack on the "specific dollars and cents" front open up, either on the over-all program or on specific aspects of it.

If the personnel agency, for example, knows the cost per employee of the personnel program within the personnel jurisdiction, a projection can be made of the total costs of operating the program on the same or an expanded basis for the budgetary year as a function of the estimated number of employees to be served during that period. Likewise, in the area of examinations if the agency has cost figures for comparable periods in terms of cost per applicant and can anticipate within reasonable limits the number of applicants to be considered in the budgetary year, fairly reliable cost estimates for examination needs and programs should be possible. Most public personnel agencies are in a position to conduct studies as to the relative effectiveness of their recruitment media and should be able to determine the most effective media, to apply them, to ascertain unit costs, and to project these in terms of the anticipated examination program.

Any public personnel agency should be acutely aware of those classes of positions for which examinations have not been held for one reason or another and in which there are provisional employees. On the basis of past experience, it should be possible to estimate the proportion of provisional employees who will fail a given examination and to justify budgetary items permitting the holding of such examinations in terms of otherwise wasted costs attributable to the expense of investing in provisionals who may be ultimately lost through failure to attain status.

Employment statistics are basic to the making of a budgetary case. Public personnel agencies should be in a position to present employment figures broken down by type of appointment, number of nonstatus employees, number of extended nonstatus employees, and number of vacancies to be filled. These data can be made to speak effectively if adequate examination cost figures can be equated to them.

There are many other factors which can be added in support of budget requests, all related to specific dollars and cents values, if reliable unit cost figures are available. Among these factors are separation and turnover rates and their implications, the advantages of low rates of turnover, the evidence that can be presented of higher turnover rates for nonstatus as opposed to status employees; the financial value of exit interviews; the money

savings to be accomplished in terms of realistic classification and compensation plans currently maintained; and the economies in time and money which derive from an effective employee relations program, including the provision of health services and employee counseling.

A budget justification, couched in terms of reasonable, reliable cost figures, program needs and projections, and based on the demonstrable truth that good personnel administration is a sound investment of the public funds, is an essential way of "making the case."

CARL LUTZ, J. L. Jacobs and Company, Consulting Engineers.

Unfortunately, all of the services rendered to a government or business by its personnel agency cannot be measured in dollars saved or dollars earned. But some can. With a few selected activities as rallying points in his arguments, the experienced personnel officer can usually show that his program is at least paying its own freight, even though he must talk in generalities about the returns from other personnel activities more difficult to measure. Here are some of the "rallying points" that can be used effectively:

Absenteeism.—A good absentee control system including employee health and safety programs will always reduce absenteeism. An agency of 1000 employees which reduces its absentee rate from 4.2 to 4.0 man-days absent per 100 man-days scheduled from one year to the next will save, in measurable dollars, a sum in the neighborhood of \$6000 annually.

Overtime Administration.—Here a personnel agency can shine again. Reductions in costly premium overtime can often be accomplished simply by instituting a little tighter control. If overtime control is not within the authority of the personnel agency, a program of education, making use of the overtime records of various units, will be effective. Most supervisors are economy minded about adding employees to their force but they do not hesitate to order overtime work. Much can be accomplished by preaching the simple arithmetical story that two men on premium overtime work are as expensive as three on straight time and get only two-thirds as much work done. A city of 1000 employees with a premium overtime policy might be expected to have 150 men who share 300 hours of overtime per week. By working with supervisors to rearrange schedules and add five or six men for most of this necessary overtime, savings of up to at least 100 hours of pay per week should result. This can add up to \$7500 annually.

Turnover.—Various estimates have been made of the cost to an employer of turnover. Such estimates average around \$150 per replacement for the costs of examination, employment, and initial training on the job. In skilled positions the costs run much higher. A good personnel relations program, careful selection of employees, equitable salary administration, and good working conditions can reduce turnover considerably. If turnover can be reduced from 25 to 20 replacements per 100 employees per year, an estimated savings to an agency with 1000 employees would be about \$7500 per year.

If the personnel office has not been able to reduce costs in the above areas, these items can be used effectively to help justify expanded programs that will result in these measurable savings. If the personnel officer can point to such savings in an agency of 1000 employees, he can show that these items alone will total over \$20,000, which probably is close to the total allocation to the personnel agency for its annual operations.

HENRY J. McFARLAND, Director, New York State Municipal Service Division.

Everyone will admit that public administrators today have a more difficult task than their predecessors of fifty years ago. Government is performing more and more services that the people wish performed, yet the very same people who want government to do more and more are apt to be the very ones who are loudest in their cry for government to reduce taxes.

In a very real sense, however, government can perform more and more tasks and at the same time reduce the cost of those services to the taxpayers if the administrators of the governmental unit are supplied with the proper tools of administration.

The cost analysis of services performed is just as important to a governmental administrator as is the cost analysis of goods produced to a business executive. Until recently, the average business executive has been far more cost conscious than many of the governmental administrators. This holds true with personnel administrators as well, many of whom have never figured out the actual costs of the services they render to their governmental unit. Neither have they attempted to evaluate their services on a cash register basis.

By identifying each kind of work performed

and writing definite class specifications, the civil service agency is performing work as valuable to the budget agency as it is to administrators and employees. What was the cost of classification to your agency? How and in what ways could additional funds for classification do a better job for administrator and employee alike?

By testing knowledges, skills, and abilities, by medical examinations and character investigations, the civil service commission endeavors to assure both the taxpayer and administrator of competent employees. How much did your examination program cost?

Each facet of a sound personnel program can be analyzed similarly. Dramatizing operating figures and costs requires some ingenuity and showmanship. Many citizens—even governmental officials—are completely unaware of the many kinds of work necessary to run their governmental unit. A mere listing can be dramatized. So can the growth in physical size of the unit's governmental structure. Everyone knows about policemen and firemen yet few realize that there is a connection between competent men and equipment in their police and fire forces and insurance rates paid for fire and burglary insurance.

One West Coast city instituted a safety training program and dramatized it by arranging for the savings in workmen's compensation premiums to be handed to the Common Council in one check.

Another agency dramatized their medical examination and health program by showing the man days added service to their locality through reduction in sick leave. Still another dramatized their suggestion system in terms of cents per \$100 estimated savings. Employee suggestion systems, properly conceived and supported, are an integral part of a broad personnel program. In the state of New York, where such a program has been in operation for several years, it was estimated that employee suggestions saved the state \$110,000 in 1948. The cost of running the program for the year, including \$4,510 paid out in cash awards, was \$17,315.

Service to citizens in the form of correspondence, telephone calls, and interviews can be dramatized. So can even such routine things as office supplies and equipment, rentals, light and repairs, printing and advertising, communication, etc.



THE BOOKSHELF



INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS. Milton L. Blum. Harper & Bros., New York, 1949. 518 pp. \$5.00.

Professor Blum has written an excellent textbook on industrial psychology. In it he sketches with swift and sure-handed strokes the developments in the field from Hugo Munsterberg to Elton Mayo and the Hawthorne Studies. Here he pauses to do an excellent summary. It is in these studies, he says, that industrial psychology really comes of age. The reporting and digest of the studies and the findings are worth reading, not only by students but also by seasoned psychologists with Ph.D.'s, Diplomate, etc. after their names. It is a first-class job.

Successive chapters show up the confluence of several streams of thought and practice: a hoped for influence of social psychologist Gardner Murphy on the prospects of industrial psychology for the future; tests and testing techniques, gingerly treated as being in danger of overselling; a somewhat contradictory point of view implicit in the extensive reporting of testing programs carried out by the writer in industrial settings; and interlarded treatments of unemployment, unions, leadership (both labor and management), opinion polls, attitude scales, selling, market evaluation, etc.

The sophisticated reader may be a little disappointed, not so much because the index of the book carries so many references to Blum, as to the fact that there are so few references to such stalwarts as Donald Paterson, Morris Viteles, and Paul Horst.

He may also be a little disappointed that Dr. Blum has fallen into the trap of reporting test reliabilities and validities as zero order correlation coefficients without a preface that would pass muster with scientifically minded readers. But this flaw is as much, if not more, a fault chargeable to the profession than it is to the writer.

Although Dr. Blum can be stuffy at times, no one can deny that he writes well. And almost every modern psychologist may well envy the measured tread with which he summarizes each of his chapters. It is in the best graduate school tradition. His bibliographical references which bring his chapters to a close are as nicely shaped as his summaries, and whatever may have been omitted in them that seems desirable but noteworthy for its absence may be

caught up in the references within the references.

He has a sense of the dramatic. This always enlivens writing and makes even unpalatable material interesting. His material is far from being unpalatable in the main, and wherever it tends to approach that, he is ready with a shot of wry humor or a telling story: the graduate student who had never learned to wind a stop watch and had to call upon his professor in the middle of a touchy experiment which he was conducting in an industrial plant; the children who brought empty lunch pails to school and pretended to eat from them because they did not want others to know that at home there was not enough food to go round.

Nevertheless the volume is strictly a textbook. It provides students and others academically minded with a swift review of the field. No technique in any phase of psychology is explained, or analyzed, or evaluated as a work tool. Many such techniques are touched upon and are described in such a fashion as to arouse interest, which they unquestionably will. Such texts have for more than two decades become a part of the American educational tradition. No one can question that they have served a valuable purpose, namely, stimulation.

Dr. Blum has extended this tradition to the field of industrial psychology in masterful fashion. By indirection he has pointed up the fact that the field is still in its infancy; that it is peopled largely by consultants who must, for the most part, earn their livelihood elsewhere; that it is still in the armchair or textbook arena, looked at skeptically by management; but that it holds great promise, first for those who have imagination and insight as doers, and next for management itself, which will ultimately be in the position of reaping the greatest gains. On just how soon these values may be realized the writer is modestly silent. That is to his credit.

The worst that can be said of his book is that it may be padded here and there with unwarrantedly long accounts of minor experiments. The best that can be claimed for it is that it brings into focus several fields of psychology and points them up as worth study, meditation, and even prayer in relation to this industrial and harried age.

The book is eminently worth reading.—
FRED S. BEERS, *Federal Security Agency*.

CIVIL SERVICE RIGHTS (NEW YORK STATE AND CITY). MORRIS WEISSBERG. Able Publishing Company, New York, 1950. 170 pp. \$5.00, \$3.00 (paper bound).

It has been eleven years since *Civil Service Law* by Dr. Oliver P. Field made its appearance. Then, for the first time, we had a comprehensive review of the judicial interpretation of civil service statutes. Until the publication of Mr. Weissberg's present work, there was practically nothing to bring Dr. Field's splendid contribution up to date. Meanwhile courts handled civil service cases at a rate defying even those most familiar with the field to keep themselves informed. The legal digests to be found in law libraries are very inadequate in their treatment of the subject. One hunting up a given point on civil service law might find the cases he needed indexed in any of several volumes of the same digest, tucked away under such headings as "Municipal Corporations," "States," "Public Officers," "Constitutional Law," "Mandamus," "Quo Warranto," "Quasi-Judicial Bodies," or even less likely places. Paul J. Kern, then President of the Civil Service Commission of New York City, said in an article in the *Harvard Law Review* for February, 1940:

A vast proliferation of case and statute law has marked the course of civil service administration. An occasional legal scholar ornaments the field but generally the craft is practiced in a legal void unembarrassed by digest, commentator, or text.

Dr. Field's work went far toward relieving the situation, but as it has necessarily become somewhat obsolete, the need of a new work to serve as a guide for public personnel administrators, city attorneys, attorneys general, and the bar is now keenly felt. The work of Mr. Weissberg fulfills to a certain degree this need; but unfortunately only in the state of New York can reliance be placed on it as a guide. The lawyer or public official in any other state who consults it must do so with caution and with understanding of its limitations.

Morris Weissberg is a member of the New York Bar, Deputy Assistant Corporation Counsel of the City of New York, and on behalf of the Civil Service Commission of New York City he has specialized in legal cases relating to the civil service. The book which now comes from his hand bears evidence of the most painstaking and meticulous research. He does not discuss the facts or reasoning of individual cases but follows the plan of setting forth, in descriptive style, an explanation of the principles involved. In order not to break the continuity of presentation he mentions no cases, but places parenthetical numbers where needed

(sometimes a dozen on a single page). These numbers refer to a tabulation of more than a thousand legal cases, for which citations are found in the back of the book. Following this plan, which certainly makes for easier continuity of thought than is the case with many legal discussions, he presents thirteen chapters, as follows:

- Qualifications
- Classifications
- Examinations
- Appointments
- Promotion, Demotion, and Transfer
- Veterans' Special Rights and Preferences
- Compensation—The Expense Budget
- Lay-off for Economy, and Reinstatement
- Resignation, Leave of Absence, and Reinstatement
- Forfeiture of Office or Employment
- Discipline and Dismissal for Cause
- Remedies and Defenses in Civil Service Litigation
- Retirement of Public Officers and Employees

This plan of presentation assists in correlation of related principles and in ready reference.

From the standpoint of civil service administrators everywhere but in New York, the usefulness of this excellent work is sharply curtailed by the fact that the author confines himself almost exclusively to the courts of New York State. A few United States Supreme Court and other federal cases are mentioned, and two cases in the Supreme Courts of other states, but nearly all of these exceptions are to be found in a short section discussing one particular topic, namely Loyalty Oaths and Communist affiliations. New York has, to be sure, more civil service litigation than any other jurisdiction, but anyone looking up a legal point, even though he might be handling a case before a New York court, would make a serious mistake in referring to New York cases alone. In other states, this book must be regarded as a valuable auxiliary tool in such research; not as a guide to be followed. Furthermore, the author frequently makes references to statutory provisions of New York, and these are sometimes cited in a way that might lead a reader to suppose that they were of general application as legal principles. Some statements which are positively made as declaring the settled law are at variance with the doctrines of many other states. For example, on page 99, in explanation of the provision for selection among the three highest eligibles, the statement is made:

Accordingly, a statute providing that the candidate rated highest in the examination should be appointed, unconstitutionally transfers the power of appointment from the department head to the civil service commission.

The case cited in support of this statement is the well-known one of *People ex rel. Balcom v. Mosher*, 163 N.Y. 32; 57 N.E. 88. But in this case the court merely held the rule of one invalid because the power to appoint was granted by the state constitution, and a statute cannot restrict a constitutional grant of power. In several other states, where the power to appoint was conferred on the appointing officer by statute, the courts have upheld certification of the highest name only. In such cases their reasoning has been that a right granted by the legislature may be taken away or abridged by the legislature as it sees fit. Several legal digests have fallen into the same error in quoting the *Balcom v. Mosher* case.

In several matters which have engaged the attention of courts in other states, and whose importance is great, no mention is made because the particular topic in question does not seem to have been before the New York courts. For example, in at least two states the constitutionality of civil service laws has been attacked because they blanketed into the classified service existing employees. This is nowhere mentioned. Other subjects either not mentioned, or mentioned with no explanation that a doctrine contrary to New York's prevails in many other states, are: (1) whether a department head may revoke a discharge and reinstate the discharged employee either with or without new evidence to sustain his action; (2) whether a civil service commission may reopen a discharge hearing with or without newly discovered evidence when the statute says that the commission's decision shall be "final"; (3) whether judicial review may be made of the facts on which a discharge has been upheld by a civil service commission after a hearing; (4) whether failure to observe certain formalities which have been prescribed by law in a discharge hearing voids the hearing or whether such statutory requirements are directory only; (5) whether, in the absence of statute, a cause not connected with employment (such as failure to pay personal debts) will constitute "conduct unbecoming a public employee" so as to sustain a discharge; (6) whether a reduction in the working hours of laborers in order to give relief work to needy citizens in a time of distress constitutes an illegal series of suspensions; and (7) whether the courts will inquire into the judgment and discretion of a civil service commission which has authorized an appointment under the "expert clause" of its law when the qualifications of the alleged expert are challenged.

These, and many other points which could be cited, do not detract from the high scholar-

ship of Mr. Weissberg's book, but merely show the desirability of expanding it by covering also the holdings of the highest courts of other states and of the federal courts, discussing conflicts of doctrine, and adapting the work to the needs of public personnel administrators all over the country. Mr. Weissberg has deliberately confined himself to a restricted field. Within the confines of that field he has produced a monumental work. It is to be hoped that he will now set himself to the greater task which is so much needed. The labor involved will be heavy, but the foundation has been well laid.—HERBERT W. CORNELL, *City Service Commission of Milwaukee*.

BOOK NOTES

THE MUNICIPAL YEARBOOK: 1950. The International City Managers' Association. 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago 37, Illinois, 1950. 598 pp. \$10.00.

This is the 17th edition of a book which supplies facts about the 2,042 municipalities in the United States with populations of 5,000 or more. The five major sections are: Governmental Units, Municipal Personnel, Municipal Finance, Municipal Activities, and Directory of Officials. Table XI, "Personnel Data for the 1,072 Cities Over 10,000: 1950," is an excellent example of the information personnel officials will find useful. Included in the table are such facts as number of employees (full- and part-time), payroll, hours of work, overtime pay, retirement systems, union organization, civil service status, etc. In addition to tabular material, the Yearbook contains articles on the most recent municipal activities in fire and police administration, health programs, finance, and personnel developments. *The Municipal Yearbook* is a very complete and up-to-date reference book.

HANDBOOK OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY. 2 Vols. D. H. Freyer and E. R. Henry, Editors. Rinehart and Company, New York, 1950. 842 pp. \$12.50.

This handbook was compiled to provide: (1) a comprehensive survey of applied psychology that differs in point of view from the treatment usually found in textbooks; (2) a detailed account of specialization in professional work that will show how psychologists apply the principles, techniques, and experimental findings of scientific psychology to the solution of everyday practical problems of society; and (3) a description of the organization and administration of professional psychology, its standards and requirements, its relations with

other professions, and its contributions to their practice.

The second unit of the Handbook—Chapters IV through VIII—will be of greatest interest to public personnel people. This section deals with the application of psychology to such subjects as job and worker analysis, interviewing and rating, classification and evaluation, test construction, selection and training. Also covered are such morale matters as safety, illumination, ventilation, and worker-manager relations. While not perhaps directly applicable, personnel officials may also find stimulation and ideas for public relations from the chapters on business psychology which deal with advertising research and product and copy testing.

One hundred and sixteen of the best known contemporary psychologists contributed articles and gave professional assistance to the editors of the Handbook.

CAREERS FOR YOUNG AMERICANS. Reuben Horchow. Public Press, Washington, D. C., 1950. 226 pp. \$3.25.

Here is a book about the Army and what it offers to young men and women. The knowledge and skills which may be acquired in today's Army provide excellent career opportunities to those who remain in the service and also to those who return to civilian status. *Careers for Young Americans* describes and appraises these opportunities for the guidance of young people, parents, teachers, and vocational advisers. It is also addressed to administrators and personnel officials. A knowledge of the useful skills learned by men and women who have been in the Army will help them select and utilize these employees to the best advantage.

The first nine chapters deal with the Army itself. Described in detail, but simply and lucidly, are such matters as enlistments, selective service, induction, pay, training, promotion, retirement, etc. Chapter Ten, which comprises more than half of the book, is a kind of occupa-

tional dictionary. Here, almost every type of military job is described and the skills involved related to their civilian counterparts.

U.S. GOVERNMENT JOBS. Carl Scott. Arco Publishing Company, New York, 1950. 43 pp. 50 cents.

U.S. Government Jobs is a kind of manual on how to find, qualify for, get, and keep a federal civil service job. All the information contained in the book about examinations, registers, salaries, promotion, reduction-in-force, veteran preference, retirement—even discrimination and politics—is available. But it must be secured from various sources, and it is often necessary to strip away a good deal of excess verbiage to get at the basic rules and regulations. That is the job the book does for the reader.

Although it was written primarily for those who know nothing whatever about the federal civil service, it may also be useful to government employees, administrators, and students. The information is up to date and includes changes brought about by the Classification Act of 1949.

HANDBOOK OF EMPLOYEE SELECTION. Roy M. Dorcus and Margaret Hubbard Jones. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1950. 349 pp. \$4.50.

This book gathers together information contained in many widely-scattered references on selection of employees by means of scientific tests and procedures. All types of regular, civilian-paid employment—factory and clerical, teaching and executive—are included. Presentation is in the form of abstracts, and a job index allows quick reference to all material relating to a particular job. A test index makes it possible to locate quickly the studies in which a particular test has been used. The abstracts are intentionally noncritical since they will be used for different purposes by different people. Sufficient factual information is given so that the reader can evaluate each one in terms of the use to which he, himself, wishes to put it.

Current Literature

Articles of Interest in the
Public Personnel Field

Personnel Administration

GOODE, CECIL E., "Personnel Offices on Trial." *Personnel Administration*, March, 1950. —The development of personnel offices in the federal government has been a necessary and desirable concomitant of our social and economic development. Specific factors influencing this development are: (1) the increase in size and complexity of working organizations; (2) realization of the importance of the human factor in production; (3) increased recognition of the human rights of workers; and (4) the increase in the federal government of legislative and regulatory requirements on public employment. Despite this, personnel offices are not in as favorable position as they should be with those they serve. Their customers—the Congress, representing the public, and management and employees—are finding fault with personnel offices. Personnel workers should appraise their work to determine what can be done to improve their service. These are some possibilities for corrective action: (1) Operating costs of personnel offices have been excessive, and though reductions have been made, possibilities for further reduction should be sought. (2) Personnel offices must give more attention to shaping their activities to fit the specific needs of the organizations of which they are a part. Attention must be given to more simplicity of technique and administration. Less reliance should be placed on developing systems and gadgets and more attention paid to management's end objectives. (3) Personnel offices are overorganized and broken down into too many compartments. Personnel office organization should be simplified as recommended by the Hoover Commission's task force on personnel management. (4) Personnel offices have been control-conscious and have developed so-called "operating functions" to control the line and to keep it "pure." More recognition needs to be given to the principle that personnel administration is a staff activity performing an advisory and assistive function to the line. (5) More attention must be given to simplification of paper work and other personnel methods. Personnel offices can thus be more of a help to management. (6) Personnel offices have accepted unquestioningly many techniques employed in personnel administration. More basic research needs to be conducted to determine whether commonly used personnel practices accomplish what they are designed to do.—*Robert Hacken*.

PEARSON, ROBERT W., "Decentralized Forms Control." *Advanced Management*, May, 1950 (How U. S. Civil Service Commission maintains control of forms and prevents duplication of forms).—With the object of preventing a proliferation of forms (with attendant printing, stocking, handling and shipping costs mounting rapidly since the war), the U. S. Civil Service Commission has for several years been operating a "decentralized" forms control system with excellent results. The former centralized control method bogged down when staff had to be curtailed because of limitation of funds. The remedy involved the following steps: (1) preparation of a forms control handbook; (2) designation of an employee in each central office operating division and in each regional office to be the "forms control person"; (3) training this employee in forms design, functional classification, analysis, etc.; (4) devising a new system of numbering which identifies level of use (i.e., Commission wide, divisional, or regional); (5) provision for continuous review at the operating level, which has eliminated superfluous or overlapping forms; (6) development of functional classification index on a Commission-wide basis, to be used by each "forms control" person; (7) retention of a small central staff to approve all Commission-wide forms and to provide training and leadership.

Local control is exercised over form design and analysis; this central staff does not clear such forms, if they are used only at the divisional or regional level. This represents a large percentage of all forms used, but each local office has only a small number of kinds of forms. To prevent duplication of forms, forms which can be used by two or more divisions or regions are issued as CSC forms, and the functional classification index and the forms control handbook procedures require the local forms control employee to determine that no similar form exists elsewhere that can be used for the purpose. All CSC forms are stocked centrally and are issued on requisition. The index is maintained in current condition in loose-leaf form and describes briefly the use of each form issued centrally. *Functional classification is punched on tabulating cards and the index pages printed on the tabulating machine*, permitting sorting by class, ready substitution for obsolete cards, and simplifying the problem of printing pages on which changes have occurred. Forms having similar purposes are grouped together under one heading, in

order of form number. There are 534 CSC forms; there are 30 divisions and regions that develop and issue forms. Files of copies of each form used would be an extravagance for so many offices, and impossible to identify readily. The brief descriptive sentence affords quick location by category. The tabulating method is inexpensive; only about 30 copies are run at one time—on five-part tabulating paper. This requires only six runs of the index cards. The functional breakdown provides an opportunity to analyze similar forms to permit consolidation or elimination, to avoid duplication, and to locate forms when form numbers are not known. Each division or regional office maintains a similar index (for forms used only locally) on a card file. *Preprinted offset masters for local printing of the CSC forms* which require overprinting of local address, etc., are furnished upon requisition. This is cheaper than shipping printed forms and avoids double printing costs. The system has eliminated duplication and waste. It has provided control of forms on an agency-wide basis. —Marvin W. Strate.

ROBERTSON, J. A. C., "Organizing for a Career Service in Great Britain." *Personnel Administration*, March, 1950—While a Ministry changes in Great Britain, a small corps of permanent civil servants find themselves de facto in charge of the day-to-day administration of the civil machine of government. To institute his policies, a new Minister in office would use this group of career civil servants who exercise a caretaker role during the change-over. Continuity is ensured. The Minister's office staff would consist of a principal private secretary to interpret the wishes of the Minister to the department, a second private secretary of the executive class, a clerical officer, and a personal stenographer. These are permanent people with considerable experience in the British Civil Service, and they represent the four main classes found throughout the service—administrative, executive, clerical, and stenographic or secretarial. The classes shape themselves into overlapping pyramids, the administrative class being the smallest (3000) and the most difficult of access.

Recruitment, training, selection, and classification of the British Civil Service have undergone changes in the last decade partly because of the lessons of war and partly because of new devices in personnel selection. The seventy-five year old method of attracting to the civil service the best academic product from the university crop each year is still operative, fruitful, and in long range, successful. Recruitment has

had three new developments: (1) under the reconstruction scheme absorbing the pick of the wartime employees; (2) planning the intake on the basis of age of employees and the prospect of future vacancies; (3) "limited" competitions for the progress of civil servants upwards from class to class in the service. Additional features are recruitment of university graduates into the executive class, extending the career avenues beyond the limits of any Department, removal of the air-tight class barriers in the service. These are in contrast to traditional recruiting of graduates without experience at three or four levels from school. Reasonable investment in training is paying dividends in the British experience. Post-entry training is generously provided by Departments under the coordinating influence of the Training Division of the Treasury.

The flexibility of the service that was imposed by necessity during the war has to some extent remained. The need for the systematic development of central posting and talent spotting has now been accepted as a permanent responsibility of the Treasury. While the career from class to class is made easier, the functions of each class, particularly the administrative, executive, and clerical are clear cut. There has been an increase in executive responsibility and a corresponding increase in use of this class of employee. The very good executive however is not being converted into a moderately good administrator. The attractions of a government career for the main professional, scientific, and technical classes have been much improved by centralized and controlled recruitment for common duties and new career structures.

Civil servants in general have been helped by the provision of new welfare and health services. The aim is to raise standards in the service to the level of the best set by other employers.—O. E. Ault.

KRIESBERG, MARTIN, AND GUETZKOW, HAROLD, "The Use of Conferences in the Administrative Process." *Public Administration Review*, Spring, 1950. Conferences are an important aspect of administration. This paper describes the role of conferences in the administrative process and seeks to establish a framework for research and practical analysis of conference usage. A study was designed in which executives were systematically interviewed on the role of conferences in their day-to-day, decision making administrative work. The following discussion is based partially upon their replies. If administration is conceived broadly as the process of making and executing decisions,

conferences may be described by their function in the decision making process. As an approximation, the administrative, decision making process may be divided into three steps: (1) gaining awareness of the problem; (2) solving the problem; and (3) securing acceptance and execution of the solution decision. *Conferences to Gain Awareness of Problems*: Some of the executives interviewed believe that regular conferences on operating problems are a valuable device for gaining knowledge of new problems upon which remedial action is necessary. Other executives feel that conferences make it easier for subordinates to raise issues by providing an atmosphere of informal discussion. By observing the interpersonal relations among staff members in the conference, the executive can gain awareness of, and insight into, frictions and barriers which exist within his unit. *Conferences to Facilitate Problem Solving*: Conferences are a means of bringing together at one time the persons who may help the executive solve a problem. The executives interviewed often called meetings to test the initial formulation of problems with those most likely to know if the problems had been correctly stated. Executives reported that the interaction of individuals in the conference group frequently provided a fresh approach and gave a problem a new twist so that it became solvable. Executives were found to use conferences where institutional patterns of action are not readily available and where pooling of experience may help guide them. Conferences are used to assure that over-all organizational purposes are kept in focus as alternative solutions are selected. *Conferences to Facilitate Solution Acceptance and Execution*: Many of the executives interviewed found conferences helpful in getting decisions accepted and put into operation. By including the individuals who would later execute the decisions, ability to implement the group's solution intelligently would be increased. Executives thought conferences help arouse sufficient motivation to insure execution of decisions. More than half felt that decisions, when reached in conference, carried added weight in the administrative hierarchy. Conferences are valuable in dealing with subordinates. Having participated in the formulation of a solution, having had an opportunity to express objections to it, and finally, having given positive assent to the decision, each individual gains impetus to carry out the decision because it is his own. Of the executives interviewed, over three-quarters thought that decisions reached in conference were more readily executed than were written directives. *Research on Conferences*: There are at least

two ways to approach research on administrative conferences. One approach would be to test the efficacy of conferences against other ways of performing the various functions connected with decision making. A second approach would be to determine which conference techniques are efficient means of producing desired results. In focusing either type of research, it is helpful to enumerate the ends for which executives use conferences and the reasons why they feel conferences are effective in achieving these ends. The summary propositions given below may serve as a check list for the practical administrator [check list at the end of the article.]—L. J. Van Mol.

Employee Relations

BEERS, R. G., "Let's Really Streamline the Handling of Unsatisfactory Employee Cases." *Personnel Administration*, March, 1950—A supervisor must be free—in fact must be expected—to take action when one of his employees cannot or will not do his job or behave properly. Also, an employee must be free to request reconsideration of his case by higher authority. The following proposals would accomplish these ends: (1) Do the just, practical, and defensible thing in the case of a person whose competence or work performance is questioned. (2) Modify laws, rules, and regulations to provide for only one procedure for an agency to take action against an employee who has completed a probationary period—except for automatic retirement on account of age. (3) Provide that before decision is made to take an adverse action, the following will be done: (a) tell him in writing what action is contemplated and specifically why; (b) air the issues in an impartial hearing; (c) make decision on the issues involved only after consideration of the employee's written reply, the hearing record, and recommendations of the hearing board. This hearing should be the only hearing held not only in connection with making the decision, but also in any subsequent reconsideration of an adverse decision that is appealed. (4) Provide that the employee may appeal to the head of the agency the action which has already gone into effect. (5) Provide that any further appeal would be to an independent employee appeals body. (6) Make binding on the agency the findings of the appellate body. (7) Provide that where there is any allegation of discrimination, as defined in Executive Order 9800, all of the evidence pertaining thereto will be considered as an integral part of the case. (8) Amend the laws, rules, and regulations to provide that whenever higher authority reverses an action

previously taken against an employee, the agency will pay him promptly for salary lost during the period involved, less such earnings from other sources that he may have had. (9) Authorize the head of the agency to suspend an employee in an emergency pending investigation and decision of the case.

The foregoing is based on the assumption that the present efficiency rating system will be eliminated or at least modified generally in line with the Civil Service Commission's recommendations. Every agency should have a grievance procedure, unrelated to personnel actions which should not provide for any appeal beyond the head of the agency, except in the operation of the Fair Employment Executive Order in so far as it applies to a failure to take personnel action.—Max S. Lindemann.

DAVIS, RICHARD G. "Governmental Employees and the Right to Strike." *Social Forces*, March, 1950.—If we admit that the maintenance of order is a more vital activity than that of any single industry, then we must suppose that the role of organized labor in the government service constitutes the limiting case beyond which we cannot go in labor relations without involving a fundamental change in the social-economic system. The labor problem of government employees is different from that of the workers in private industry, for it involves a contest between a specific group of citizens on one hand and all of the people, acting through the instrumentality of government, on the other. The right of employees of the federal government to organize is recognized by law. However, the duty of the federal government to enter into collective agreements is another matter. In all the bargaining agreements entered into by the federal government there is one feature that is conspicuous by its absence, and that is any reference to the employees' right to strike. Neither the national government nor its regular employees consider the strike to be a permissible method of settling a labor dispute to which the government is a party. In states and municipalities the right of public employees to organize is not at all uniformly established. In some cases, where the right of organization is specifically granted, the right to bargain collectively is denied. The strike question on state and municipal levels is not as definitely settled as it is on the national level. Much of the difficulty in determining the relations of employee organizations to state sovereignty has been in the failure to draw a distinguishing line between government as an instrumentality of public authority and as an employer of civil servants. The rela-

tion between the government and its civil servants is essentially a contractual one and any recognition of this relationship implies a recognition of employee organization and some form of collective bargaining. However, a system of collective bargaining does not face the problem of the strike; it simply avoids it. In the last analysis, a strike by the public servant must be looked upon as a challenge to the order of the society and must be resisted by government. Yet, since no law can prevent strikes if such action is the only means of preventing serious injury to a group of persons, the alternative of a system of collective bargaining seems to be an inevitable development in our society. The solution is a limitation by society on both organized capital and organized labor without destroying the organization in either case. A council would be established representing labor, management, and the public to establish fair wages, working relations, and profits, with both groups bound to abide by the council's decision without recourse to strike or lock out.—Thomas L. Culhane.

Placement; Service Standards; Evaluation

KNIGHT, F. J., "Fallacies in Job Evaluation." *Advanced Management*, June, 1950.—Job evaluation, as conducted in the vast majority of cases today, is a pious fraud. In evaluating a job, we are seeking to determine what it is worth; that is, its price. The same forces of supply and demand determine the wage rate for a job as they do the price of a loaf of bread. The factor of supply and demand is usually only recognized when the wage schedule for a plant is being established and is tied in with a schedule of average rates being paid by all plants in a community. Even then it is tied in only to standard or "key" jobs. Wage rates for other jobs are then set by assuming a logical relationship between them and the "key" jobs. Observations of the behaviour of prices generally show that the natural relationships of prices of various items are never constant for long, but fluctuate endlessly. Although in the long run, the price of a pound of butter may bear some relationship to the price of a bushel of corn, both bearing some relationship to agricultural costs, the relative prices of butter and corn are always changing. Should we then expect that the value of an hour of foundry helper's time will always bear a fixed relation to the value of the time of a carpenter or machinist? Any such assumption is wholly unjustified and any system of job evaluation built upon it will in time come to grief. An attraction of traditional job evaluation is that it purports to eliminate, for always,

the bother of having to negotiate changes in the relative rating and pay of different jobs. Variations between actual market rates and the evaluator's calculated rate should not be automatically regarded as proof that the actual rate is wrong. Temporary scarcities of workers with particular skills should be openly admitted as legitimate justification for "out of line" rates instead of recommending that the rate be "brought in line" or juggling "weights" and "degrees" until the existing rate seems to be in line. Statistics of supply and demand and a careful examination of jobs and rates will be needed to do a scientific job. "Points," "weighting," and "ranking" are useful devices with which to draw comparisons and need not be abandoned. Their function, however, should be transitory. Oversimplification to the point of pretending that problems don't exist can only create new problems. If we are going to call it scientific management, let's be scientific.—*Verlyn L. Fletcher.*

Testing

HAMILTON C. HORACE, "Bias and Error in Multiple-Choice Tests." *Psychometrika*, June, 1950.—For many years, test administrators have used the formula, $S = R - \frac{W}{k-1}$ for scoring multiple-choice items. The purpose has been to obtain the "real" score, corrected for guessing. This formula is not based on sound mathematical theory but is an improper reversal of the formula for the actual linear regression of raw scores on real scores. A more suitable formula is derived. This formula does not involve the assumption of a binomial distribution of real scores as does the Calandra formula. Other formulas derived show the variance of real scores in terms of the variance of raw scores, and the correlation between real scores and raw scores. The formulas recommended will not change the rankings of the test group. They are useful, however, for obtaining a rough estimate of real scores and for preventing overweighting of true-false items in a battery including other types of items.—*Lloyd W. Woodburn.*

DOUGLAS, ANNA G., "Shall Civil Service Endorse Science or Novelty?" *Public Administration Review*, Spring, 1950.—Civil Service aims to divorce appointment to office from political patronage and to substitute impartial judgment and a logical method of matching personnel and jobs. Psychologists have sought to raise test standards nearer the level of scientific operation and to guard against violation of controls and cautions which they have established. Some of the dangers about which they have warned have arisen in connection

with a "group oral performance test" given by the New York State Civil Service Department for supervising labor mediator. Candidates were a group of currently operating labor mediators and provisional supervisors. The examination abrogated the rules prescribed by test specialists for legitimate use of the group oral performance in the following respects: (1) it appears not to have conformed to the requisites of a scientific test instrument with respect to the type of rating scale used; (2) the interpretation of the leadership role seemingly followed by the examiners was the controlling or dominating one without recognition of the need for the integrative and permissive leadership concept in conflict situation; (3) the structure of the examining situation was so dissimilar to that of the job situation that it is questionable whether it tested for the latter; (4) the group oral was used to test in the area of "knowledge and skill" and the consensus in the field is that this test is unfit for this purpose; (5) in every other case on record, the group oral has been used only as one among a variety of examining methods contributing to a composite judgment.

Civil Service should not be asked to drop from its repertoire all instruments of unknown value. It has responsibilities for functioning as a laboratory in the evolution of assessment techniques and theories, but a test instrument like the group oral performance should be made the object of extensive research study before it is used as a tool for selection of candidates. (Article contains bibliography.)—*Augusta Fink.*

Recruiting

DUBOIS, P. H., and WATSON, R. I., "The Selection of Patrolmen." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, April, 1950.—A recent need for a large number of patrolmen in St. Louis, Missouri, provided an opportunity to make a study on the prediction of success of patrolmen in training and on the job. Two hundred and fifty-three men met required minimum qualifications and started the examination process. Of this number, 129 were included in the study after successfully completing the examination and graduating from the police academy. A battery of 12 psychological selection and experimental tests was administered to the men, yielding 29 sets of scores. Each of these was correlated with four criteria of validity: (1) final grades at the police academy, (2) scores on an achievement test on knowledge of police practices, (3) marksmanship during the training process, and (4) service ratings after 10 weeks on duty. A specially constructed police aptitude test and the Army General Classification Test were consistently good predictors of

academic performance at the academy and of the achievement test score, yielding correlations between .39 and .54. At least one non-verbal test, such as the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test or the Minnesota Paper Form Board, was needed in order to achieve a multiple coefficient of validity in the neighborhood of .60. The best predictors of marksmanship were nonverbal aptitude tests. A combination of a specially constructed memory test, the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test, and the Minnesota Paper Form Board yielded a multiple correlation of .33 with the marksmanship criterion. None of the tests explored had a significant correlation with rating on the job by superior officers. A multiple correlation of .29 was obtained, however, with a combination of a special information and judgment test pertaining to police work, the block counting items in the AGCT, a test requiring visualization in three dimensions, and two variables of the Rozenzweig Picture Frustration Study. The later recruitment of additional patrolmen provided an opportunity to check the results of the study. A predictive score at the police academy, based upon regression weights developed during the study, correlated .62 with final grades at the academy, slightly better than anticipated. (Article contains tables showing restriction in range of the sample, correlations, and beta weights.)—*Robert W. Coppock.*

Salaries

"Salaries of Policemen and Firemen: A Quarterly Century Review." *Monthly Labor Review*, June, 1950.—Salary schedules of policemen and firemen employed in U.S. cities have increased more than 80% over the past quarter century. The sharpest advances occurred during the past decade, when salaries rose

about 50%. Salaries increased somewhat during the late 1920's but declined sharply in the early 1930's. Practically the entire increase during the 1940's occurred after 1942. The wartime increase was 17%, as compared with 26% for the postwar period 1945 to early 1949. Salary rates for these workers responded to the same general pressures that lifted the whole wage and salary structure of the country during these years. However, the increase for policemen and firemen between 1939 and 1950 did not equal that in the cost of consumers goods and services as measured by the BLS consumers' price index. The index rose by an estimated 69%, compared with a 52% raise in salary scales for policemen and firemen. Moreover, these workers received proportionately smaller salary increases than did wage earners in manufacturing. Both the level and trend of earnings were practically the same for policemen and firemen. Wage movements varied little among different-sized cities, although those with 250,000 and less than 500,000 population showed somewhat greater average increases. Increases in individual cities ranged from 10 to 50% or more. Cities employing one-fourth of the policemen and firemen raised salary scales between 20 and 25%. Generally the size of the increases since 1945 has borne little relationship to the salary levels of the city at the beginning of the five-year period. A gradual reduction in the length of the work week for both groups of workers has accompanied the rise in salaries. Between 1934 and 1950, cities employing three-fifths of the policemen reduced their hours, amounting to about six per cent. For firemen, hours on duty were reduced by cities employing almost nine-tenths of all firemen studied; the average decrease amounted to about 25%. (Tables.)—*Richard W. Darling.*

END OF VOLUME 11

The October (No. 4) issue of *Public Personnel Review* concludes Volume 11 of the publication, covering the calendar year 1950. A subject matter and an author index to this volume appear in the following pages, and a title page is also included for the convenience of subscribers who wish to bind the volume as a unit.

Public Personnel Review Index VOLUME 11, 1950

THE ENTRIES in this index are arranged alphabetically by author under the following nine subject headings:

Personnel Administration—General Aspects
Personnel Management
Classification; Pay
Recruitment; Selection; Induction
Placement; Service Standards and Evaluation
Training
Work Terms; Conditions of Employment
Employee Relations
Separation

The nature of each entry is identified by the following symbols: (A) Original articles; (Ab) Abstract of an article; (B) Book Review; and (PO) Personnel Opinions. Each entry shows, in the following order, the author, title, nature of the item, volume and issue number, month, and page numbers.

Following the subject-matter index is an author-page number index.

The page numbers of the four issues in the 1950 volume are as follows:

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